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The International Working-Class Movement

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OF HISTORY
AND THEORY

In seven volumes

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B.N. PONOMAREV

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The International Working-Class Movement

PROBLEMS
OF HISTORY
AND THEORY

Volume 4

THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION
IN RUSSIA
AND THE INTERNATIONAL
WORKING CLASS
(1917-1923)



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В семи томах

Том четвёртый

**ВЕЛИКИЙ ОКТЯБРЬ
И МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ РАБОЧИЙ КЛАСС
(1917-1923)**

На английском языке

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THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

PROBLEMS OF HISTORY
AND THEORY

VOLUME 4

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The volume is devoted to a radical turning point in the destiny of mankind, the beginning of the new era of world history ushered in by the Great October Revolution. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the revolutionary upsurge of 1917-1923, the new stage of the international working-class movement and the emergence of the first socialist state, the revolutions in Central Europe, the clash between revolutionary and social-reformist trends, development of the strategy and tactics and organisation of the communist movement, including problems of a united working-class front and national liberation movement. The role of V.I. Lenin, the greatest theoretician and leader of the world proletariat, and the international significance of Leninism are given due prominence.

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CONTENTS

Preface

11

Part I

A RADICAL TURN IN MANKIND'S FATE

23

Chapter 1.

The Working Class Comes to Power

25

The Russian Proletariat

25

Lenin's Plan for Development of the Revolution

30

The Peaceful Period of the Revolution

40

Problems of the Approach and Transition to the Socialist Revolution

51

Steering for an Armed Uprising

60

Chapter 2.

Victory of the Revolution

72

The Proletariat Takes Power

72

The Triumphal March of Soviet Power

75

Building the Workers' and Peasants' State

83

The First Revolutionary Reforms in the Economy

100

The Soviet Republic's Fight for Peace

106

The Plan for Building Socialism

115

Aggravation of Civil War

123

Chapter 3.

The Post-October Revolutionary Upsurge

137

International Repercussions of the October Revolution	
	137
The Workers' Revolution in Finland	
	147
A New Stage in the Anti-War and Social Struggle in Capitalist Countries	
	152
The Russian Experience and Social Democracy in Other Countries	
	170
The Maturing of the Revolutionary Crisis in Europe	
	183
<i>Chapter 4.</i>	
Revolution and Counter-Revolution	
	191
The November Revolution in Germany	
	191
The Austrian Revolution	
	208
The Hungarian Soviet Republic	
	215
The Struggle in Central and Southeastern Europe	
	224
The Social Battles in Western Europe and the USA	
	235
<i>Chapter 5.</i>	
The Two Lines in the International Working-Class Movement	
	254
The Demarcation of Revolutionaries from Reformists	
	254
The Founding of the Communist International	
	263
The Confrontation of Revolutionary and Reformist Ideologies	
	279
The Lessons of the Revolutionary Upsurge	
	295
Part II	
THE BROADENING OF THE WORLD PROLETARIAT'S FRONT OF STRUGGLE	
	301
<i>Chapter 6.</i>	
Defence of the Republic of Soviets	
	303
Against Interventionists and Whiteguards	
	303
War Communism	
	318

The Ruling Class

328

The "Hands Off Russia" Movement

343

Chapter 7.

The Revolutionary Vanguard and the Masses

358

The Change in the Alignment of Forces in the Labour Movement

358

Lenin on Winning the Majority and the Infantile Disease
of "Left-Wing" Communism

373

The Principles of Communist Strategy, Tactics and Organisation

388

Reformists' International Activity

403

Chapter 8.

The Working Class and the National Liberation Movement

418

The Comintern and the National and Colonial Question

418

The Class Battles of the Latin American Proletariat

433

Asian Workers and the Fight for National Liberation

441

The Working People of Africa Against Colonialism

461

Part III

THE WORKING CLASS IN THE NEW CONDITIONS

471

Chapter 9.

The Transition from Attack to Siege

473

Soviet Russia and Peaceful Coexistence

473

The Search for a New Economic Policy

481

The Economic Crisis and Struggle in Capitalist Countries

503

Consolidation of Communist Parties

513

The Fight Against the "Left" Danger

525

The Communists' Watchword: "To the Masses!"
534

Chapter 10.

Problems of United Actions by the Proletariat
554

Capital's Offensive and the Danger of Fascism
554

The Tactics of the Workers' United Front
568

The Conference of the Three Internationals
574

The Idea of a Workers' and a Workers' and Peasants' Government
588

Chapter 11.

The Formation of the USSR. Revolutionary Battles in Europe
607

Restoration of the Economy and the Unification
of the Soviet Republics
607

Lenin on the World Revolution and the Building of Socialism
in the USSR
625

The Revolutionary Crisis of 1923 in Germany
636

The Anti-Fascist Uprising in Bulgaria
647

The Strike Struggle in Poland
654

The Anti-Imperialist Revolution in Ireland
661

The Working-Class Movement in Decline
664

International Proletarian Solidarity
679

Chapter 12 (Conclusion).

The International Role of Leninism
689

Lenin and the World Revolutionary Process
689

Social Contradictions in the Epoch Since October 1917
698

At the Centre of the Battle of Ideas
710

Name Index

737

PREFACE

The period covered by this volume of *The International Working-Class Movement* is one of special significance in the history of mankind, and above all in the history of the world labour movement.

This volume deals with years in which events of a truly epochal character took place. The victory of the October 1917 Socialist Revolution in Russia led to the establishment of a new social system. It opened a period of revolutionary upsurge that swept Europe and other continents. The impact of the October Revolution, needless to say, was not limited to the years 1917 to 1923; it continues now as well. But it was then that, with the personal involvement of V. I. Lenin, decisive changes began which in many ways determined the direction and character of subsequent developments.

In the three preceding volumes of this work, we have shown what complicated paths the development of the working class took, how it was transformed from a "class in itself" into a "class for itself" and became an active and menacing opponent of capitalism, and how it prepared to fight for socialism.

The revolutionary nature of the proletariat had already been clearly displayed in the middle of the 19th century, but it was not yet then capable of acting as the determinant force of social progress. Then the very first steps were taken toward uniting the labour movement and scientific socialism. In no country of the world was there a revolutionary party of the working class that proclaimed its aim to be the fight for socialism; and the international ties of the various national contingents of the proletariat were only being forged.

At the end of the 19th century the basic contradiction of capitalism—labour vs capital—became sharper. The bourgeoisie by coming out against the proletariat, and striving to unite all the reactionary forces of the old world (including its old opponents, the feudal class) against the working class, thereby demonstrated the limits of its historical possibilities. From being the motor of social progress, it became the brake.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the proletariat was already not only showing its inherent revolutionary character but was also staking a serious claim to the leading role in society, the role of builder and leader of the future, new social organism, socialism.

"The army of the international proletariat is taking shape," Engels wrote in 1894, "and the approaching new century will lead it to victory."¹

In the period from the end of the 19th century to the outbreak of World War I, the working class increased in numbers by roughly 100 to 150 per cent in the advanced countries (Great Britain, Germany, and the USA).

In 1914 the international proletariat already numbered more than 90 million. The proportion of its core—the industrial workers—had grown. Although the war reduced the numbers of the working class to some extent in the belligerent countries, especially in those that were the theatre of operations, the proletariat continued to increase in numbers, especially in the USA, Canada, and Great Britain. The size of the working class had also begun to grow rapidly in most of the other countries of Europe and the Americas, and in Japan, as the industrial revolution was completed. The forming of a working class was also accelerated in backward countries, including the colonies.

The main point, however, was not the size of the proletariat, but the fact that its level of organisation had greatly altered by the beginning of the 20th century. Its trade union organisations, formed earlier, had become a powerful weapon in its fight for better working and living conditions (especially in the Anglo-Saxon countries and Scandinavia, and later in other countries). Their total membership in 1914 was more than 15 million. The unions continued to grow during the war years, and in 1918 already had nearly 21 million members.

The formation in all capitalist countries of independent political parties of the proletariat that proclaimed the fight for socialism their aim was even more significant. By the outbreak of World War I, 27 Socialist, Social-Democratic and Labour parties, with 4,200,000 members, belonged to the Second International. More than ten million voters had supported their candidates at the polls, or two or three times as many as at the end of the 19th century, and the number of representatives elected (in the 14 countries where labour parties took part in parliamentary elections) had reached 650.

The development of the labour movement, and above all of proletarian political parties, however, was very complicated and contradictory. At the turn of the century they had suffered an onslaught of opportunism that sank its roots into all the main parties of the Second International in the years following. The deep connection between imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, and opportunism in the labour movement was disclosed by Lenin. The main thing

¹ Friedrich Engels, "Grussadresse an die Sozialisten Siziliens", In Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 22, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1963, S. 477.

about opportunism, he stressed, was the substitution of class collaboration for class struggle, i.e. "an alliance between a section of the workers and the bourgeoisie, directed against the mass of the proletariat".¹ The fact that "imperialist ideology also penetrates the working class"² was seen with special force at the outbreak of the world war, when opportunism became social-jingoism: "The alliance with bourgeoisie used to be ideological and secret. It is now public and unseemly. Social-chauvinism draws its strength from nowhere else but this alliance with the bourgeoisie and the General Staffs."³ The leaders' betrayal demoralised and demobilised the working class, and prevented it from discovering and exploiting its potentialities in an anti-war class struggle.

By unleashing a world war for redivision of the world and spheres of influence, the bourgeoisie reckoned that the working class, weakened by opportunism, would be unable to frustrate its designs and come out as a resolute opponent of the war. It hoped, moreover, that the war itself could help it get a tighter grip on the working class and suppress its revolutionary aspirations. Although the leaders of the Second International went over to the capitalists, the latter's calculations, however, ultimately came unstuck: the war postponed the revolutionary explosions but did not prevent them; on the contrary, it intensified the impending storm.

The Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks), founded by Lenin, resolutely resisted the policy of the ruling class and the line of the opportunists. It was in fact a party of a new type that integrally combined Marxism and the labour movement and was ready to lead the proletariat's revolutionary struggle to abolish the exploiter system and build a new society. Right from the beginning of the world conflict it came out for turning it from an imperialist war into a revolutionary, civil war. Lenin and the Bolsheviks considered that, though opportunism was doing great harm to the labour movement, it had not abolished or suppressed it, that the war would inevitably provoke a new upsurge of its struggle, and that the workers would inevitably begin revolutionary battle for their vital interests.

This boundless faith of Lenin's and Leninists' in the forces of the working class, which then evoked ironic comments from the right-wing leaders of Social-Democracy, was confirmed by events. That was to be expected, since Lenin based his analysis on the study of the

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Collapse of the Second International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, 1974, p. 242 (here and hereafter Progress Publishers, Moscow).

² V.I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, 1964, p. 285.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Opportunism, and the Collapse of the Second International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 443.

deep-seated trends of social development, and of the development of the working class and labour movement. He made the very important conclusion that the system of imperialism was on the whole ripe for the socialist revolution, and that the international labour movement had reached the degree of maturity at which it could begin to carry out its great historic mission.

The imperialist war accelerated internationalisation of the proletariat's conditions of existence and struggle. At the same time, by drawing into its orbit countries that were at different stages of social, economic, and political evolution, it had made the army of the international proletariat more diverse and multiform, the tasks of revolutionary reforms broader and more all-embracing, the relation of national and international factors much more complex and contradictory. The unevenness of the growth of revolutionary activity in the different countries and regions, could not stop the revolutionising of the masses, though, in some cases, it retarded it.

The way events developed in the war years provided the objective preconditions for rise of a revolutionary situation and its growth into a revolutionary crisis. The war exacerbated all the contradictions of capitalism to the limit, having converted monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism, increased exploitation and social contrasts, and put socialism on the order paper. The death of millions of people, the lowering of the working people's standard of living (by 48 per cent in Germany; by 20 to 25 per cent in France; by 17 to 23 per cent in Great Britain; and by 10 to 15 per cent in Italy and Japan), and the considerable increase in political oppression by the ruling classes all provoked growing resistance by proletarians. They began to turn away from the opportunist leaders who had betrayed their interests. The influence of left, internationalist groups was greatly strengthened in Social-Democracy and the trade unions.

The masses of Russia were especially rapidly revolutionised. The Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, basing themselves on the conclusion that victory of the revolution was possible in the new situation at first in one country, taken separately (about which we spoke in the preceding volume), intensively prepared the Russian proletariat and its allies for a decisive struggle against tsarism and the domination of landowners and capitalists, and for the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

The right-wing Social-Democrats, the centrists, and even some Left Social-Democrats declared this stand of Lenin's a sort of utopia. Considering that only the West was capable of laying the road to socialism, they said, first of all, that Russia was still not ripe for socialist revolution, that the Russian proletariat was too small in numbers compared with the vast mass of the peasantry, and not sufficiently educated, and therefore could not win, let alone build, the

new society. But it was these statements of Lenin's opponents in Russia and Europe that proved utopian and, moreover, reactionarily utopian. Because the Russian proletariat, although it was weaker in numbers than the Western, and behind it in level of education, nonetheless had unsurpassed political experience, and relied on the revolutionary traditions of 1905-1907 when it had demonstrated its capacity to lead the peasant masses. And, most important, it had a militant, tempered revolutionary organisation, Lenin's party, ready and capable of leading it in the decisive battle.

The Paris Commune of 1871 had opened a new stage in the fight of the working class, the stage of preparation to storm the old world. The October 1917 Socialist revolution in Russia triumphantly stormed it. Although it took place initially in one country, the revolution in itself was an event of international importance. Elimination of the dominance of feudal landowners and capitalists in Russia signified that *the world working class had begun in practice to overthrow the last social system based on private ownership of the means of production*. The proletariat of Russia, which was the first to rise and achieve victory, also began to cope with the next task, viz, *the building of a new, socialist society, which would develop later into communist society*.

The October Revolution thereby demonstrated in reality that the international working class had reached the stage of maturity when it had become capable in practice of taking the fate of society into its own hands and leading it along hitherto unknown roads of socialist construction. As a result, a second epoch-making step was taken compared with the Paris Commune, a gigantic stride forward in the world development of socialism. Although that stride was extremely difficult and cost the working class of Russia no few sacrifices, it brilliantly confirmed the basic conclusion of the Marxist-Leninist theory of the proletariat's world historic mission. Lenin wrote: "Human history these days is making a momentous and most difficult turn, a turn, one might say without the least exaggeration, of immense significance for the emancipation of the world."¹

The victory of the Socialist Revolution became the main event of the 20th century because it radically altered the course of history. It did not simply open the next stage in the development of society; it raised the most important issues of the socio-political and economic struggle in the whole world to a qualitatively new level. Leonid Brezhnev said in his report "The Great October and Progress of Mankind": "Understandably, the problems solved by the October Revolution were primarily Russia's problems, posed by its history, by the concrete conditions existing in it. But basically, these were

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Chief Task of Our Day", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 159.

not local but general problems, posed before the whole of mankind by social development. The epochal significance of the October Revolution lies precisely in the fact that it opened the road to the solution of these problems and thereby to the creation of a new type of civilisation on earth."¹

From that angle, the authors of this fourth volume, drawn from the Institutes of World History, History of the USSR, and the International Labour Movement of the USSR Academy of Sciences, and from the Institutes of Marxism-Leninism and Social Sciences of the Central Committee of the CPSU, have striven primarily to show that the October Revolution, besides being *a new era in world history*, opened *a new stage in the development of the international labour movement*. This refers both to the problems of its history and to matters of theory, since the revolutionary transformation of the world begun in November 1917 (October according to the old calendar; hence the name, the October Revolution) created a new situation for the international working class's struggle for its immediate and ultimate goals.

Our team started from the point that the picture of the world in that period cannot be reproduced by a simple description of the events that took place following the October Revolution in various regions and countries, although the panorama of these events itself is broad and majestic. Penetration of their substance, and disclosure of the main trends calls for a multidimensional analysis, and allowance for all the complexities of the interactions and interconnections.

In analysing the important social phenomena and processes Marxism always proceeds from the principle of historicism in combination with the concept of their world-wide impact. But this concept is itself historical and dynamic. The October Revolution, as the first act of the international, world revolution, gave this concept an unprecedentedly rich, real content. The concept of world-wide impact, probably for the first time, began not only to embrace and link together concrete phenomena taking place in the most remote corners of our planet, but also to draw into itself elements of the social and political creative activity both of nations traditionally in the van of progress and of backward and small ones. It was all the more important, avoiding clichés and simplifications and with due account for the diversity of the later world revolutionary development, to bring out and stress the general patterns inherent in it. The guiding thread in our work on this volume has been the idea of Marx and Lenin that scientific study of history calls for an integrated approach, wherein history is viewed "as a single process which, with all its immense variety and contradictoriness, is governed by definite laws".²

¹ L.I. Brezhnev, *Our Course: Peace and Socialism* Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1978, p. 171.

² V.I. Lenin, "Karl Marx", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 57.

Without anticipating the exposition of the main events, we would draw the reader's attention to their periodisation proposed in this volume. In the first part of the volume we examine the *turn in human history* that embraces the preparation and victory of the Socialist Revolution in Russia, the revolutionary upsurge throughout the world connected with its direct impact, the fierce fight of the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces in Central Europe (Germany, Austria, and Hungary), the social battles in other regions in 1918-1919, and (as the first result of the revolutionary battles) the struggle of two lines in the international labour movement.

In the second part we deal with the *broadening of the front of the world proletariat's struggle*. The heroic fight of the Soviet people led by the working class and its Party to defend the revolution against the onslaught of internal counter-revolution and foreign intervention, is shown side by side with the building of the Soviet state, the beginning of socialist reforms, the policy of War Communism, and the role of international proletarian solidarity in consolidating Soviet power. The communist movement in capitalist countries, overcoming what Lenin called the infantile disorder of "leftism", moved from forming the revolutionary vanguard to winning to its side the masses, moulded the principles of its own national and international strategy, tactics, and organisation, and fought the reformists. The upsurge of the national liberation movement in dependent and colonial countries created powerful reserves for a broad anti-imperialist front.

The *ebbing of the revolutionary wave* beginning in 1921, which is reviewed in Part III, called for a search for new forms and methods of proletarian struggle. Passing over to peaceful construction, Soviet Russia was able to consolidate its international position, while the New Economic Policy promoted movement toward socialism. The communist movement fought to win the support of the masses of the proletariat and its allies and tackled the complicated problems of organising united actions of the proletariat against reaction and fascism, taking into account the diversity of national conditions, and of overcoming the counteraction of reformists. In this part, as in the others, great attention is paid to the role of Lenin, the founder of the world's first socialist state, whose ideas had a great impact on the strategies and tactics of the world proletariat. The volume concludes with an analysis of the international significance of Leninism.

Among the problems we have deemed it necessary to go into more or less fully drawing on concrete historical material, are the following, which we suggest are the most important ones.

(I) As a result of the October Revolution the working class of Russia became, for the first time in history, the dominant, ruling class. This faced it with problems that the proletariat had never

before had to cope with. The socialist revolution ploughed the soil to a depth never before penetrated by social revolutions. It drew the whole mass of the working class and other working people, the majority of the people, into the process of historical creation. That resulted in the radical and thorough character of the social transformations begun. Their main aims were clearly defined already in the early years of Soviet government, in spite of the enormous difficulties that then had to be overcome: viz., the creation of social production to improve the working man's well-being in every way possible, and provision of the conditions for all-round development of the individual and a general rise in culture.

In those very complicated circumstances, the Russian working class not only fulfilled its international duty as the pathfinder and vanguard of the world army of the proletariat, but also, displaying prodigious heroism and self-sacrifice, drew workers of other countries who found themselves in Russia at the time, and the oppressed peoples of the near and remote periphery into the revolutionary process. From the very first days of the revolution, the working class and its government appeared before the nations plunged into imperialist war as the standard-bearer of peace. The Soviet working class, fighting in capitalist encirclement, defended the sovereignty of the Soviet Republic. In the fierce struggle it relied on the support and sympathy of the international proletariat, and turned its country into the forepost and base of the liberation struggle of the working people across the world. Therefore, both the activity of the working class itself and the entire constructive work of the socialist state it set up are integrally linked with the international labour movement by unity of aim and community of struggle against imperialism. Any attempt on any pretext to disrupt or weaken this international interdependence serves the enemies of progress and socialism.

(2) Victory of the revolution substantially strengthened the position of the international working class giving it new levers of revolutionary transformation. Hitherto the proletariat had waged its struggle against the bourgeoisie wielding power, and had been in a very unfavourable position *vis-à-vis* it. Capital dominated all continents, and held the instruments and means of asserting and maintaining domination hallowed by centuries of tradition. The proletariat was not only an exploited class but was also humiliated and impoverished materially and spiritually. Now the balance of power between the main class antagonists had been altered in the proletariat's favour.

First of all, the monopoly of capitalist rule had been broken. All attempts to restore it by military, economic, political, and ideological means failed thanks to the solidarity struggle of the international proletariat which derived confidence in the success of its own strug-

gle from the victories of the Soviet Republic. It was the first time that the international actions of the working people had acquired such an immense sweep. Proletarian internationalism became not only a slogan and theoretical principle, but also an active source of strength for all the national contingents of the working class and other working people. It was not just on the international arena, however, that the successes of the land of socialism, and later of the world socialist system as well, began to have an impact, but also, to a great degree, within each capitalist country. Every advance of socialism in the sphere of the economy, politics, and culture opened up new, broader opportunities for the working class of capitalist countries to defend its vital interests and to attack the positions of imperialism. Today's social and political gains of the workers in capitalist countries, and the national emancipation of the peoples of dependent and colonial countries, would have been inconceivable if there had not been the Soviet Union, which smashed fascism and is effectively defending peace and security.

(3) During the post-1917 revolutionary upswing, an ideological shift and a certain change took place in the psychology of the international working class, associated with the rise of its revolutionary vanguard's class consciousness. The October Revolution, despite the difficulties attendant on it, already in the early years graphically demonstrated the proletariat's capacity for independent, historical creativity, its capacity for building a society without exploiters and parasites living on other people. It thereby struck a blow not only at the dogmas of bourgeois ideology, which proclaimed the capitalist system to be unshakeable, but also at the ideas of liberal-democratic reformism, which exploited the masses' force of habit and the belief of the oppressed in the strength of the old world, and preached reconciliation with social inequality for a long time in anticipation of humankind's self-perfection.

The 1917 Revolution struck a blow at reformist Social-Democracy and opportunism which clung to the scheme that socialism was only possible in countries which reached a high level of economic development, where the working class constituted the majority of the population, was trained and disciplined by capitalism, and prepared to govern the state and manage production. This conception not only closed the road to socialism to semi-developed and weakly developed countries, but condemned the workers of advanced countries as well to reformist passivity, calling on them not to resort to destructive revolutionary methods of struggle, since capitalism itself, it was claimed, was gradually civilising itself; when the working class had become sufficiently educated and learned to use democratic rights, it would then, by virtue of its numbers, become the most influential force in society.

These theories of class peace were blown sky high by the experience of the imperialist world war. The events of 1917 convincingly demonstrated that the ruling classes would not voluntarily yield power, that only socialism, and not capitalism, could radically solve the problems the working people had been fighting over for decades. As Boris Ponomarev remarked in the introduction to this study, the October Revolution was the first one in man's history "to grant the working class and nations not only formal political rights but also the material conditions required to enjoy them".¹

Before 1917 the revolutionary consciousness of the international proletariat had been moulded mainly by a feeling of protest against capitalist oppression and exploitation, while socialist convictions had been formed mainly by Social-Democratic propaganda and Marxist literature. Now socialism had been converted from an abstract ideal into a reality, and was increasingly becoming an influential factor in the world revolutionary process and international relations.

The example of the October Revolution taught the world labour movement much, demonstrating practical ways of overthrowing the domination of capital, and disclosing the need to spare no effort to defend the power won. It was an example of the quest and accomplishments in the as yet unprecedented business of building new society and new state on the ruins of the old system. The labour movement in each separate country has amassed its own experience, of course, and has no need at all to copy the experience of another country. But much of what was first discovered by the October Revolution has since, in spite of a substantial difference in conditions, been repeated in the main by other socialist revolutions and merits recognition as international experience of general significance.

(4) Ever since the Social-Democratic Parties and the Second International passed, first covertly and then overtly, to reformist and chauvinistic positions the labour movement on a worldscale and in the overwhelming majority of countries had no organised revolutionary vanguard. The October Revolution demonstrated with special force the important role of a revolutionary party in a revolutionary period, a party steeled in battle and firmly linked with the masses. The first months of the post-October upsurge in Europe had already indicated that the groups of revolutionary internationalists existing in them were still unable, despite the heroism they displayed, to guide the maturing or beginning revolutions. The founding of communist parties everywhere became a vital need of the labour movement. In the same way, the formation of an international centre of the revolutionary movement, the Communist International, at whose

¹ *The International Working-Class Movement. Problems of History and Theory*, Vol. I, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1980, p. 18.

helm stood Lenin, was also natural and necessary. Subsequently, as we know, when the situation in the world changed and there was no longer any need for a centralised international organisation of communist parties, the Comintern was dissolved.

Soviet Russia's experience and example inspired the advanced part of the working class in European countries to turn away from reformist theory and practice, to emancipate itself from the influence of the right-wing and centrist leadership of Social-Democracy, and to take an active part in revolutionary actions. Social-Democracy's almost complete dominance in the labour movement—both in the parties and in the trade unions—was broken. A process of ideological and organisational demarcation of Communists and Social-Democrats, the two main streams in the world labour movement, developed in acute forms.

Under the counteroffensive of the bourgeoisie, the inception of fascism, the growing danger of a new war, and the decline in the revolutionary activity of the masses that began, there was a need for united, co-ordinated actions of the various contingents of the working class and other strata of the working people. Lenin and the Communist International initiated a policy of a united workers' front, putting forward the idea of a workers' and worker-peasant governments, a united anti-imperialist front in the national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples, and a unity of all currents of the revolutionary movement. Although the reformist leaders' resistance to this line was not overcome in the early 1920s, the foundations were then laid of a policy that subsequently played a very important role in the anti-fascist struggle of the international working class, the creation of a world system of socialism, emancipation from colonialism, and the later struggle for peace, democracy and socialism.

(5) With victory of the October Revolution the mounting role of the subjective factor in the revolutionary struggle became obvious. For the first time a new society and state were not growing spontaneously, but were being built by the conscious constructive activity of millions of people led by the party of Bolsheviks. The founder of this party, and at the same time the architect of the new epoch, the man who theoretically substantiated and politically ensured the preparations for and carrying through of the first victorious socialist revolution, and the building of socialism, was *Vladimir Lenin*. A vivid political portrait of him was drawn in Leonid Brezhnev's report at the 50th anniversary celebration of the October Revolution:

"Vladimir Lenin has entered history as the founder of the Bolshevik Party, as the great leader and organiser of the working masses and as a scientist of genius. He was a revolutionary in the loftiest and most noble sense of the word. His whole life was one of unremitting struggle for the happiness and interests of the working people.

"Moreover, the leader of the Revolution is incomparable as a strategist of revolution and unsurpassed in political tactics. He intuitively sensed every change in the alignment of political forces and in the mood of the masses and knew how to translate this mood exactly into the language of high-level politics, put forward the most effective mass slogan in the given situation and chart the surest way to the objective.

"He was irreconcilable with regard to questions of principle in ideology and politics. But this never hindered him from displaying maximum flexibility in the approach to specific problems. An ardent revolutionary, he mercilessly ridiculed pseudo-revolutionary phrasemongering. A born fighter, he could when necessary agree to compromise and retreat in order to muster forces and then take the offensive more successfully.

"By his nature he could not tolerate anything smacking of bigotry or dogmatism. His creative approach to theory and politics enabled him comprehensively to develop and enrich the Marxist teaching of revolution and the science of building socialism. Despite being immersed in day-to-day work, in a host of urgent affairs, he mapped out the general line for socialist construction in Russia and laid down the principles underlying Soviet domestic and foreign policy.

"Both as a statesman and as a person Lenin was an extraordinarily modest man. The leader of the world proletariat, the man whom the Revolution placed at the helm of the world's first state of workers and peasants was exceedingly exacting to himself, with absolutely no play-acting or vanity.

"Lenin was 47 when from the rostrum of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets he proclaimed the triumph of the socialist revolution. He was 54 when his heart stopped beating. But death was helpless before the greatness of Lenin's genius."¹

In 1980 the whole world marked the 110th anniversary of Lenin's birth. And as always on the days of outstanding revolutionary anniversaries, the progressive forces of the modern world not only rendered due tribute to the remarkable work of the greatest revolutionary, theorist and practical leader of socialist construction, but also summed up the results of the road followed by mankind under his banner. These results demonstrate with new force the inexhaustibility of Lenin's ideas and the invigorating power of Marxism-Leninism, which was displayed for the first time with such gigantic force in the Socialist Revolution of 1917.

¹ L.I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972, pp. 14-15.

Part I

A RADICAL TURN
IN MANKIND'S FATE

Chapter 1

THE WORKING CLASS COMES TO POWER

THE RUSSIAN PROLETARIAT

While Russia was a country of an average level of capitalist development, it differed from the other imperialist powers primarily in combining elements of monopoly and state-monopoly capitalism with extremely backward, semi-patriarchal relations on the land. Russian reality, Lenin said, was most profoundly distinguished by the contradiction of "the most backward system of landownership and the most ignorant peasantry on the one hand, and the most advanced industrial and finance capitalism on the other."¹ Because of the intertwining of old and most modern forms of oppression the masses of the working people in town and country suffered under a double yoke, to which Marx had already drawn attention in *Capital*: not only the development of capitalist production, but also the incompleteness of that development.²

In level of industrial production Russia lagged far behind France, Great Britain, Germany, and the USA. But in degree of monopolisation of a number of industries it yielded pride of place only to Germany and the USA. In 1913 around 200 monopolies dominated Russia's economy.³ More than 80 types of production and marketing of major products were in the hands of amalgamations like Prodamet, Gvozhd, Produgol, Prodvagon, Krovlya, Prodarud, etc.⁴ The number of monopolies increased by 897 new stock companies during World War I. Around 2 million workers were employed in more than 5,000 war plants.⁵ Russia was ahead of all the countries of Europe as regards concentration of banks: the seven biggest banks held 52 per cent of the total banking capital.⁶ "The number of large shareholders is insignificant," Lenin wrote in May 1917, "but the role they play, like the wealth they possess, is *tremendous*. It may safely be said that if one were to draw up a list of the *five or even three thousand*

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Political Notes", *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, 1972, p. 442.

² See Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, 1974, p. 20.

³ I.I. Mints, *The History of Great October*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1977, p. 34 (in Russian).

⁴ A.L. Sidorov, "The Economic Prerequisites of the Socialist Revolution in Russia", *Istoriya SSSR*, 1957, No 4, p. 27 (in Russian).

⁵ L.S. Gaponenko, *The Working Class of Russia in 1917*, Moscow, 1970, p. 94 (in Russian).

⁶ A.L. Sidorov, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

(or perhaps even one thousand) of Russia's wealthiest men, or if one were to trace ... all the threads and ties of their finance capital, their banking connections, there would be revealed the whole complexus of capitalist domination, the vast body of wealth amassed at the expense of the labour of others."¹

Another feature of Russian imperialism was its dependence on foreign capital which dominated several most important industries: Franco-Belgian in the iron and steel and coal industries of South Russia, British in the oil industry, German in electrical engineering. On the eve of World War I the weight of foreign capital in these industries was 52 per cent, and its overall average share was around one-third.² The available raw materials and cheap labour gave foreign monopolies exceptional opportunities to make enormous profits in Russia.

In 1917 Russia remained a predominantly agrarian country. Its total population on the eve of the war was 159,200,000, of which 18 per cent lived in towns and 82 per cent in the country.³ Wage-earners numbered 18,500,000 in 1917. Of them, industrial workers, the core of the Russian proletariat, numbered 3,545,000. Another 1,265,000 (including white-collar workers) were employed in transport, 1,250,000 in building, and 4,500,000 in agriculture.

In spite of its comparatively small numbers, the proletariat, however, was a significant social and political force, incomparably greater than the millions of the scattered masses of the peasantry. This was due in the main to the high concentration of the working class in the country's vital centres and in big enterprises. In the capital, Petrograd, and its suburbs, there were 546,100 workers, 392,800 of them factory workers, around two-thirds of these engineering workers. Around 80 per cent were employed, moreover, in enterprises with more than 500 workers. 24,449 were employed in the Putilov Works, 19,046 in Trubochny, 15,338 in Treugolnik, 10,600 in Obukhovo, and 10,200 in the Okhta Works.

In Moscow there were between 410,000 and 420,000 workers, more than 200,000 of whom were factory workers. Over a third were textile workers, and a quarter engineering workers. The concentration in big enterprises was lower than in Petrograd, Moscow did not have giant works. But all the same there were 28 enterprises with more than 1,000 workers, including the Trekhgorny Textile Mills with 6,000 workers, the Danilov Textile with 5,700, the Gujon Steelworks with 3,300, the Dynamo Electrical Engineering Works with more

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Inevitable Catastrophe and Extravagant Promises", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, 1974, p. 428.

² A.L. Sidorov, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

³ *The National Economy of the USSR in 1978. Statistical Yearbook*, Moscow, 1979, p. 7. (in Russian).

than 3,000, and the Michelson Engineering Works with around 2,000. More than 54 per cent of the workers were employed in 73 enterprises with more than 500 workers each. There were also many big enterprises outside Moscow in the Moscow Province (more than 220,000 factory workers), and in the 12 adjoining regions that made up the Central Industrial Area, with centres like Tula (where the Arsenal employed 25,000 workers), Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Shuya, Kostroma, Yaroslavl, and Nizhny Novgorod (around 20,000 workers were employed in the Sormovo Engineering Works there). All in all, there were not less than a million industrial workers in this area. Together with the Petrograd Province it produced up to 40 per cent of all the industrial output of Russia, and up to half of the proletariat employed in big enterprises was concentrated in it.

In the Urals miners played the leading role among the 357,000 workers. In the Ukraine the industrial proletariat numbered 893,000, with around two-thirds of them concentrated in the Donets and Krivoi Rog Basins. There were also considerable contingents of the working class in the Baltic provinces, Poland, and the Transcaucasia. The oil-fields of Baku and its province alone had around 60,000 workers. On the whole 72.35 per cent of the proletariat in 31 regions of European Russia was employed in enterprises with more than 500 workers. In the other regions—Siberia, the Far East, Turkestan, and the Caucasus—the total numbers of the factory proletariat were small, but there were quite important industrial centres.

The Russian working class was not uniform socially. The majority were first-generation newcomers from the peasantry in origin, the minority second-generation. Because of the peculiarities of land tenure many workers retained not only family connections but also economic ties with the peasant milieu. On the one hand that retarded development of the class consciousness natural to the hereditary core of the proletariat. But on the other hand these ties helped draw very broad masses of the rural poor into the joint revolutionary struggle. Understanding of the community of interests of the workers and peasants spread increasingly both in the army and in the rear during the imperialist world war; in the rear migrants from the country filled the gaps created in industry by mobilisation for the front. The ratio of men and women in industry altered during the war approximately from 70 : 30 to 60 : 40. In the textile mills the number of women increased by 16.7 per cent, and of teenagers by 34.4 per cent.

In Russia there was still no effective legislation to protect the workers' interests. The working day was longer than in the countries of Western Europe. Earnings were lower and miserly; at the end of the war real wages were not more on the average than half the prewar figure. The overwhelming majority of the proletariat lived in conditions humiliating to human dignity. The rural labourers

suffered from lack of land, lack of horses, the arbitrariness of land-owners, and merciless oppression by tight-fisted employer farmers (kulaks), and moneylending shopkeepers. All that, taken together, promoted an accumulation of dissatisfaction with and resentment against the existing system.

The core of the advanced workers who consciously took the road of revolutionary struggle consisted of the skilled workers of the big industrial enterprises (around 40 per cent of the working class), who lived in comparatively more tolerable conditions and were fighting not just for an extra crust of bread for themselves and their families but also for social justice for the working people and against lack of rights, against oppression and the tyranny of the powers that be.

The bourgeoisie, afraid of the revolutionary workers, could not become the standard-bearer of the democratic struggle and extend its influence to any significant fraction of the labour movement. The unresolved agrarian problem, the ruin of the peasantry, the brutal national oppression of the non-Russian peoples, which had made Russia a prison of nations, all had a great impact on the whole socio-political situation and psychological climate.

For those reasons the struggle of the revolutionary proletariat, the peasant revolution, and the national liberation movement merged into a common struggle against tsarism, the main enemy of all the working people. Russia became the weak link in the chain of imperialism because its specific economic and political development exposed the deep contradictions inherent in the stage of imperialism more vividly than in other countries. These contradictions, gathered into a single knot, were aggravated to the limit by the world war, which brought the peoples of Russia particularly great distress and privations.

During the first Russian revolution the Russian working class had already outdistanced the other contingents of the international proletariat in political development, not only displaying a high level of revolutionary courage and audacity, but also acquiring experience of political leadership of the non-proletarian masses. Then, as Lenin wrote, the fact that "our bourgeoisie is utterly unstable and counter-revolutionary" had been demonstrated, as well as the capacity of the proletariat to be "the *leader* of a victorious revolution", and the readiness "of the democratic masses of the peasantry to help the proletariat to make this revolution victorious".¹

From then on the Russian proletariat had continued to consolidate its position as leader of the revolutionary masses, fighting tsarism even in the hardest times of retreat of the revolution and triumph of reaction. With the outbreak of the world war both the bourgeoisie

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The 'Leftward Swing' of the Bourgeoisie and the Tasks of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, 1982, p. 400.

and broad strata of the peasantry were seized by chauvinistic moods. Only the working class proved to be immune to chauvinism to a considerable extent. And in that sense, too, it showed itself to be the most advanced contingent of the international proletariat. The tsarist authorities were therefore less able than the governments of other countries to exploit the war to reduce the fighting capacity of the workers, who not only continued to fight in the difficult situation of war time but intensified their struggle. Evidence of this is the scale of the strike struggle in three of the belligerent countries (Russia, Germany, and France), as will be seen from the table:

Table 1

Numbers of Strikers (in thousands)

Year	Russia	Germany	France
1915	539	14	9
1916	1,086	129	41

Source: *The World War in Figures*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1934, p. 88 (in Russian).

The fact that labour aristocracy in the ranks of the Russian proletariat was small also helped this situation. Opportunism and reformism were common among the intelligentsia and the petty bourgeoisie, but were much weaker among the politically active workers.

The complete separation of the revolutionary Social-Democrats, the Bolsheviks, from opportunist elements had been prepared by the whole history of the labour movement. The Party of Bolsheviks was the main force that trained the fighting qualities of the Russian proletariat. Its concern for ideological clarity had brought down many imprecations on the Bolsheviks for limiting "free thinking". But it became clear in the war years that the European Social-Democratic Parties' ignoring ideological work had encouraged infection of considerable strata of the working class with jingoism. The Bolsheviks' attacks on chauvinistic intoxication, on the contrary, were evidence both of their personal courage and of the superiority of a party whose ideological and political independence enabled it to go against the stream and to rescue the banner of revolutionary Social-Democracy.

The Party of Bolsheviks was also prepared organisationally to wage the revolutionary struggle in the difficult situation created by the war. It had great experience of parliamentary and other forms of legal struggle. At the same time it had always paid great attention to forms of activity that trained the masses for the most resolute

revolutionary actions. The Party's years of painstaking work to prepare the Russian proletariat ideologically, politically, and organisationally for bold, selfless struggle against the autocracy bore its fruit in the days of February 1917 (early March, according to the European calendar, later adopted in Russia).

LENIN'S PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVOLUTION

The February Revolution immediately went beyond the limits of the normal bourgeois revolution. The Romanov monarchy, which had celebrated its 300th anniversary a few years before, was swept aside by the onslaught of the masses. And because of the revolutionary energy, consciousness, and organisation of the proletariat, that happened in one swift action.

The essential feature of the February Revolution, which made it unusual and drove it further than all previous revolutions (with the exception only of the Paris Commune), was the fact that the masses' revolutionary initiative created agencies of a new, revolutionary power, Councils (Soviets, the Russian name for them, later to become internationalised) of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in the capital and throughout the country. The dual power that took shape at the centre and in localities was unique intertwining of two dictatorships—the power of the bourgeois Provisional Government, and the power of the Soviets which in essence was the revolutionary, democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

The bourgeoisie only succeeded in partially seizing political power. While the people's fight against the autocracy was still only developing, disagreements arose among the various groups of the bourgeoisie. But when it became clear that it was impossible to preserve the monarchy, these disagreements receded into the background before their common desire to limit the scope of the revolution, to curb the revolutionary storm and steer it into the framework of customary legality. The Provisional Government headed by Prince G. E. Lvov included the main bourgeois leaders. The Constitutional-Democratic Party (the Cadets) was represented by P. N. Milyukov, the October 17th Union (the Octobrists) by A. I. Guchkov. The millionaire sugar manufacturer M. I. Tereshchenko became Minister of Finance. Only the post of Minister of Justice was entrusted to A. F. Kerensky, leader of the peasant Trudoviks Group (who soon switched to the party of Socialist-Revolutionaries).

The political programme proclaimed by the bourgeois leaders was so conservative that it looked like a direct challenge to the masses who had made the revolution. The main party of the bourgeoisie, the

Cadets, which soon changed its name to the People's Freedom Party, did not respond to the national demand for peace, but came out for continuing the war "till victory". The reactionary bourgeois camp numbered 27 Russian and national parties in 1917.¹ The Russian capitalist class, like the imperialist circles of the Entente that supported it, hoped that the revolutionary fervour which had gripped the masses might help raise the fighting efficiency of the Russian armies, as had happened in revolutionary France at the end of the 18th century. But the situation was different and the popular masses were different.

A considerable part of the millions of the petty-bourgeois masses, it is true, who had been roused to action but were not experienced in politics, believed that the war had become a defensive, revolutionary one for Russia after the fall of the autocracy. But this wave of "revolutionary defencism" was short-lived and did not develop into readiness to continue the annexationist imperialist war.

The bourgeois parties did not intend to tackle the agrarian problem. Instead of confiscating the manorial estates and handing the land over to the peasants, they only promised later to alienate ownership of lands their owners did not farm, on condition that the government and peasants paid them 6 or 7 billion roubles in compensation.² The Cadets upheld the tsarist principle of a "single and indivisible Russia" which implied a policy of suppressing the national liberation movement of the oppressed nations. They went no further than a promise to allow the non-Russian nationalities economic and cultural autonomy. The Provisional Government, having promised to convene a Constitutional Assembly, did not hurry to define when and how the elections would be held. Capitalist historians have often expressed regret since at the shortsighted policy of the Russian bourgeoisie. The American historian Merle Fainsod, for example, wrote: "If the Provisional Government had been able to withdraw from the war and carry through a land settlement satisfactory to the peasantry, it is highly doubtful that the Bolsheviks could have gathered enough support to stage a successful coup d'état."³ And an opponent of the Bolsheviks from the leftist camp observed:

"All the more ironic was it that in 1917 none of the bourgeois parties, not even the moderate Socialists, dared to sanction the agrarian revolution which was developing spontaneously, with elemental force, for the peasants were seizing the aristocracy's land long before the Bolshevik insurrection. Terrified by the dangers that threatened

¹ L.M. Spirin, *The Collapse of Landowners' and Capitalist Parties in Russia*, Moscow, 1977, p. 293 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 244.

³ Merle Fainsod, *How Russia Is Ruled*, Harvard U.P., Cambridge, Mass., 1963, p. 85.

property in town, the bourgeois parties refused to undermine property in the country.”¹

The policy of the Russian bourgeoisie really was shortsighted, but not by chance, and not because of a subjective mistake of one leader or another. The reactionary nature of their views and their fear of the “elemental force” of the people, especially of the proletariat, were historically due both to the onset of the epoch of the general collapse of capitalism and the acuteness of the class contradictions in Russia. In other words the bourgeoisie proved incapable of tackling the objectively maturing tasks facing society, and was only concerned with how to cling to power.

The situation of dual power, naturally, could only be temporary. Either the Soviets, relying on a considerable part of the army and the armed people for support, would have to take on the carrying through of revolutionary changes, or the Provisional Government, which initially was unable to use force against the people, would have to find means of suppressing the Soviets and establishing the unchallenged power of the capitalist class.

The leading role in the political army of the democratic revolution was played by the proletariat led by the Party of Bolsheviks. The February Revolution, which confirmed the correctness of the Bolshevik slogans, was the beginning of the state where the imperialist war was to be converted into a civil war. In Petrograd and other centres the Bolsheviks put in tremendous work to organise and rally the proletariat, above all in works and factories. They began to mould a political army of the socialist revolution, and prepared the workers for various forms of struggle, including armed struggle. The Party worked actively in the army, and strove to penetrate deeply into the thick of the peasant masses. Its branches operated in very difficult circumstances throughout the country. During the revolution the Bolsheviks were in the forefront of the mass struggle, but they did not have sufficient strength to bring the whole tempestuous revolutionary stream under their influence.

The petty-bourgeois parties of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries (SR), their leaders spouting slogans of democracy consonant with the mood of the broad masses as yet politically inexperienced, were on the crest of the upsurge. At the time, petty-bourgeois parties—Menshevik Social-Democratic, Populist, Anarchist, etc., plus those of the various nationalities—numbered 23 (L. M. Spirin. *op. cit.*, p. 293).¹ Menshevik N. S. Chkheidze was elected chairman of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies, and Menshevik M. I. Skobelev, and Trudoviks’ leader Kerensky became his vice-chairmen. These leaders were able to

¹ Isaac Deutscher, *The Unfinished Revolution, Russia 1917-1967*, Oxford U.P., London, 1967, p. 23.

persuade the Soviet, against the warnings of the Bolsheviks, to hand over power voluntarily to the bourgeois Provisional Government. Mensheviks and SRs succeeded in heading the Soviets in many other cities as well.

In the Menshevik Party, which kept the name Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, the right-centrist leaders F. I. Dan, I. G. Tsereteli, and N. S. Chkheidze enjoyed most influence. While adopting a chauvinist position, after the February Revolution they came out in words for both socialism and peace and democracy. The real essence of the party's policy, which had 193,000 members in August 1917,¹ was more frankly expressed by Georgi Plekhanov, then on its right wing: "Russian history has not yet ground the flour from which the wheaten cake of socialism will be baked Until it has ground such flour the participation of the bourgeoisie in public administration is necessary in the interests of the whole country, and consequently in the interests of the working people themselves."²

The Socialist-Revolutionary Party came out after the Revolution with a broad democratic programme promising a republic and freedoms of every sort. While rejecting class struggle, it laid claim to the role of representative of the "united working people", primarily the peasantry. Acting in the spirit of neopopulist ideas it promised socialisation of the land based on equal distribution. It soon had more than 500,000 members. Formally, around a million members were registered in the party (L. M. Spirin. *op. cit.*, pp. 301, 303).

For all the differences in their programmes, the Mensheviks and SRs were united by the petty-bourgeois basis of their policy. While at the head of the Soviets and not believing in the potential of the Russian proletariat, they strove in every way to strengthen the position of the Provisional Government, and to build support for it among the masses. While claiming the role of a third force between the Cadets and the Bolsheviks, they adopted a wavering, vacillating position on all the main issues of the revolution, and in practice inclined more and more to direct collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

The popular masses above all demanded ending the war and the conclusion of peace. The Mensheviks and SRs publicly declared that they did not support the bourgeoisie's programme of war till victory and came out for peace without annexations and reparations; at the same time, however, they advocated continuation of the war against Germany in the name of "defence of the Revolution against the external enemy". The workers introduced the 8-hour day in the factories without prior permission. Meanwhile, the Mensheviks proposed waiting for a legislative solution of this issue. The peasants were demanding immediate agrarian reforms and were beginning to occupy ma-

¹ L.M. Spirin, *op. cit.*, pp. 300-301.

² *Edinstvo*, 20 June 1917 (3 July new style).

norial estates on their own initiative, but the SR Party opposed such actions, considering that only the Constituent Assembly could sanction land reform. On the national question neither the Mensheviks nor the SRs went any further than "cultural-national autonomy", postponing this issue, too, to the Constituent Assembly. Such a line primarily benefited the capitalist class, which was trying to gain time in order to consolidate its power and master the situation.

In the conditions building up, the fate of the revolution depended to a decisive extent on the position of the Bolshevik party. It had profoundly analysed the lessons of the 1905 Revolution and had rich experience of leading the revolutionary masses. Right from the start it supported the Soviets, and expressed distrust of the Provisional Government. But the situation that came about after the February Revolution demanded a new orientation, a new strategic plan and new tactics. The Russian Bureau of the Central Committee, endeavouring to consolidate the Soviets, did not then wholly understand the situation. The absence of Lenin, who was in far-off Switzerland, had its effect.

Learning of the outbreak of the revolution in Russia, Lenin immediately stressed that this was only its first stage, which "will not be the last, nor will it be only Russian".¹ He pointed out that the Provisional Government could not give the people peace, or bread, or liberty, and oriented the Party on *passing* from the first stage of the revolution to the second by consolidating and developing the role, significance, and strength of the Soviets. His main message was: "*Workers, you have performed miracles of proletarian heroism ... in the civil war against tsarism. You must perform miracles of organisation, organisation of the proletariat and of the whole people, to prepare the way for your victory in the second stage of the revolution.*"²

Lenin returned to Russia on 3 (16) April 1917, after 9 years of emigration. In a historic speech from an armoured car at the Finland Station of Petrograd, he greeted the workers and soldiers who had laid the foundations of a social revolution on an international scale. The next day he was already presenting a report, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution", which contained a profound analysis of the situation. In his "April Theses" and later speeches and articles, he outlined a plan of action for the revolutionary party of the proletariat, and defined the strategic aim and the tactics necessary to achieve it.

Lenin clearly appreciated the character of the shifts taking place. To the extent that power had passed from the landed aristocracy to the capitalist class, "to this extent the bourgeois, or the bourgeois-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "To Alexandra Kollontai, March 16, 1917", *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, 1976, p. 295.

² V.I. Lenin, "Letters from Afar", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, 1964, pp. 306-307.

democratic, revolution in Russia is *completed*".¹ The rise of dual power was evidence that the revolution "has gone farther than the ordinary bourgeois-democratic revolution, *but has not yet reached* a 'pure' dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry".²

He saw the main task of the revolutionary party and the working class as "*passing* from the first stage of the revolution—which, owing to the insufficient class-consciousness and organisation of the proletariat, placed power in the hands of the bourgeoisie—to its *second* stage, which must place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants"³. That approach followed from his theory of the socialist revolution and his conclusion that it could be triumphant initially in one country. The slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" required systematic and patient explanation to the masses that only a government of the Soviets would be really revolutionary. It was necessary to convince the masses from their own experience of the correctness of the Bolsheviks' policy and the fallacy of the line of the conciliatory parties, which were holding back development of the revolution. Since the Provisional Government could not stop being imperialist, it was to be refused any support. But Lenin's most important conclusion, new in principle, was "not a parliamentary republic—to return to a parliamentary republic from the Soviets of Workers' Deputies would be a retrograde step—but a republic of Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies throughout the country, from top to bottom"⁴. History had not yet known such a republic.

The February Revolution confirmed that the centre of the world revolutionary movement had shifted to Russia. The Russian working class moved to the vanguard of the international struggle, and this laid additional obligations and responsibilities on it. In that connection Lenin wrote: "There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and that is—working whole-heartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in *one's own* country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy, and material aid) *this struggle* ... in *every* country without exception."⁵ The working class of Russia therefore had to push the revolution forward to the maximum in order to do its international duty successfully.

Lenin's new directive, setting the aim of *developing* the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist one, presumed a further con-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Letters on Tactics", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, 1974, p. 44.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 61.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

vergence and intertwining of the democratic and socialist goals as it developed, with the former subordinated to the latter. There appeared prospects of carrying out the democratic tasks of the revolution, unresolved in its bourgeois stage, in the course of a socialist revolution. It was clear from the outset that this coming together of democracy and socialism was only possible given two essential conditions, namely: (1) consistent dissociation of the proletarian line from the petty-bourgeois, conciliatory one; and at the same time (2) winning over the broad *masses of the petty bourgeoisie*, i.e. the peasantry, to the side of the proletariat, above all the poor peasants without whom it was inconceivable altogether to establish proletarian power and advance to socialism. In the new stage of the revolution a new balance of class forces also had to be developed. As Lenin had already established in 1905, the proletariat and the poorest peasantry could become the driving forces of the socialist revolution; the inevitable wavering and vacillations of the middle peasantry necessarily had to be overcome by neutralising it.

Lenin considered it necessary to amend the Party's Programme in the light of the new tasks, to change its name, and to set up a new, revolutionary International free of chauvinism and centrism.

His plan was widely discussed at the Petrograd city and 7th (April) All-Russia conferences of the RSDLP(B), and in the press. Lenin had to carry on a sharp polemic both with those who, referring to the Bolsheviks' old formulas, were against the policy towards the socialist revolution, and with "leftist" critics. In this debate he refined and developed his views, including those on the relation between democracy and socialism, as the revolution developed.

In his discussion with L. B. Kamenev Lenin stressed the need to reckon with the specific situation that had taken shape, and showed the depreciation of the old formula that the bourgeois-democratic revolution is not accomplished until the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the working class and peasantry is established, bourgeois democracy has exhausted its possibilities, the agrarian question has been resolved, and so on. Kamenev's position on co-operation with the petty-bourgeois parties followed from this premise. In opposition to it Lenin stressed that the revolution had already created the Soviets—new *type of state*, similar to the Paris Commune, a higher type which was superior in its democracy to any parliamentary bourgeois republic and which opened the road to socialism.¹ The Soviets, having become a state authority, would more fully ensure independence of the masses, and would "more effectively, more practically and more correctly decide what *steps* can

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

be taken toward socialism and how these steps should be taken".¹

Lenin regarded criticism of the mistakes of the petty-bourgeois parties in the obtaining conditions as "most *practical revolutionary work*", because there were no other means of "advancing a revolution that has come to a standstill, that has choked itself with phrases, and that keeps 'marking time', *not because* of external obstacles, *not because of violence* of the bourgeoisie, ... but *because* of the unreasoning trust of the people". Only daily explanatory work could "really stimulate the consciousness both of the proletariat and of the mass in general, as well as their bold and determined initiative *in the localities*—the independent realisation, development and consolidation of liberties, democracy, and the principle of people's ownership of all the land."² That was the real road leading to the full and undivided power of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and other deputies.³

Lenin stressed the need to concentrate all efforts on the fight for influence *within* the Soviets, the organisations of the majority of the people, on educating the masses, and raising their class consciousness, and he warned the Party of the danger of sinking into subjectivism and losing touch with the people. He came out against attempts to "skip over" the unresolved tasks and resolutely dissociated himself from Blanquist adventurism and any kind of playing at "seizing power". The error of Trotsky's "leftist" formula "No tsar, but a *workers' government*" lay in just such a Blanquist approach.⁴

When A. I. Rykov said it was impossible to count on the sympathy of the masses for the socialist revolution in petty-bourgeois Russia, and that the impetus toward it must come from the West, Lenin replied: "Nobody can say who will begin it and who will end it. That is not Marxism; it is a parody of Marxism. Marx said that France would begin it and Germany would finish it. But the Russian proletariat has achieved more than anybody else. ... We must not lapse into reformism."⁵

The April Conference, and, before long, the whole Party, too, understood the political line Lenin developed after an in-depth analysis of the new conditions created by the revolution. When substantiating the orientation on socialist revolution, Lenin proceeded from his earlier analysis of imperialism and the world war unleashed by it. He considered the problem of the *maturity of the conditions*

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Letters on Tactics", *op. cit.*, p. 53.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution", *op. cit.*, p. 63.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Political Parties in Russia and the Tasks of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 98.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Letters on Tactics", *op. cit.*, pp. 48, 49.

⁵ V.I. Lenin, "The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. (B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 246.

for a socialist revolution to be above all an international issue, and not just a national one. "From the point of view of Marxism," he said at the conference, "in discussing imperialism it is absurd to restrict oneself to conditions in one country only, since all capitalist countries are closely bound together. Now, in time of war, this bond has grown immeasurably stronger."

The conference resolution on the current situation, drafted by Lenin, therefore, began with a description of the position of "world capitalism". It said: "The objective conditions for a socialist revolution, which undoubtedly existed even before the war in the more developed and advanced countries, have been ripening with tremendous rapidity as a result of the war. The concentration and internationalisation of capital are making gigantic strides; monopoly capitalism is developing into state-monopoly capitalism."

This trend, Lenin noted, could have two directly contrary consequences. With maintenance of private ownership of the means of production it would lead to an intensification of exploitation, oppression, reaction, military despotism, a growth of capitalists' profits, etc. "But with private ownership of the means of production abolished and state power passing completely to the proletariat, these very conditions are a pledge] of success for society's transformation that will do away with the exploitation of man by man and ensure the well-being of everyone."¹

In the draft of the Party's amended programme that he made in April-May 1917, the international revolutionary outlook was depicted still more graphically. Imperialism and the war transformed "the present stage of capitalist development into an era of proletarian socialist revolution". The fact that "that era has dawned" meant that the revolution and its triumph were inevitable, yet the struggle would be difficult: "Only a proletarian socialist revolution can lead humanity out of the impasse which imperialism and imperialist wars have created. Whatever difficulties the revolution may have to encounter, whatever possible temporary setbacks or waves of counter-revolution it may have to contend with, the final victory of the proletariat is inevitable." The character of the impending epoch determined the working class's strategic task: "Objective conditions make it the urgent task of the day to prepare the proletariat in every way for the conquest of political power in order to carry out the economic and political measures which are the sum and substance of the socialist revolution."²

In elaborating on the international factor in the development of the revolution, Lenin also analysed the role of Russia in the world

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference...", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 238, 309, 310.

² V. I. Lenin, "Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme", *Collected Works* Vol. 24, p. 460.

revolutionary process in accordance with his concept of the link between the proletariat's national and international tasks: "The great honour of beginning the revolution," he said at the opening of the Conference, "has fallen to the Russian proletariat." Needless to say, "the proletariat of Russia cannot aim at immediately putting into effect socialist changes. But it would be a grave error, and in effect even a complete desertion to the bourgeoisie, to infer from this that the working class must support the bourgeoisie, or that it must keep its activities within limits acceptable to the petty bourgeoisie, or that the proletariat must renounce its leading role in the matter of explaining to the people the urgency of taking a number of practical steps towards socialism for which the time is now ripe."¹

But was Russia capable of being the *first* to take the socialist road? Both the international authorities of Social-Democracy and the Russian pillars of the capitalist class, of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, were unanimous in answering in the negative: in view of its backwardness Russia was not ripe for socialism, it was too early to introduce socialism there, that was a bourgeois revolution and would remain so, and the Bolsheviks who were trying to push it further, were hopeless "adventurers", "Blanquists", "terrorists", or even worse.

In general, Lenin replied, socialism could not be "introduced" in any way, and what was necessary were those transitional revolutionary measures that had matured in practice, that were both economically and technically feasible and would be "steps toward socialism". These measures included "nationalisation of the land, of all the banks and capitalist syndicates, or, at least, the *immediate* establishment of the *control* of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies."²

The resolution of the April Conference spoke of centralisation and nationalisation of the banks, insurance companies, and major capitalist syndicates (the sugar refineries, Produgol, Prodamet, etc.), and of general labour conscription under the control of the Soviets. "Extreme circumspection and caution" would be required when implementing these measures, the resolution stressed, i.e. "a solid majority of the population must be won over and this majority must be convinced of the country's practical preparedness for any particular measure. This is the direction in which the class-conscious vanguard of the workers must focus its attention and effort, because it is the bounden duty of these workers to help the peasants find a way out of the present debacle." It is in these last words that Lenin saw the nub

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference...", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 227, 311.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 73-74.

of the whole resolution: approaching socialism not as a leap in the dark but as a practical way out of the existing disruption.

“‘This is a bourgeois revolution, it is therefore useless to speak of socialism,’ say our opponents. But we say just the opposite: ‘Since the bourgeoisie cannot find a way out of the present situation, the revolution is bound to go on.’ ... When all such measures are carried out, Russia will be standing with one foot in socialism.”¹

The Conference also discussed the agrarian and national questions in the context of the line adopted. Nationalisation of the land was characterised as a measure that did not go immediately beyond the bourgeois system but, nevertheless, struck a strong blow at private ownership of the means of production. The class meaning of the demands for nationalisation of all land and confiscation of the manorial estates was brought out in Lenin’s report. The fate of the Russian Revolution, the resolution said, depended on whether the urban proletariat would succeed in drawing the rural proletariat and the mass of the rural semi-proletariat after it. The Party called on the peasants to take the land immediately in an organised way, through the Soviets and other bodies, without waiting for the Constituent Assembly. Victory of the socialist revolution also largely depended on whether the working people of the oppressed nations would follow the proletariat. The leftist slogan “down with frontiers” was rejected; the resolution drafted by Lenin recognised the right of all nations to self-determination, free secession, and the formation of independent states, without confusing it with the issue of the desirability of secession.

The April Conference recognised the need to review the Party Programme and include an assessment in it of the new epoch of wars and revolutions and the demand of a Republic of Soviets. A number of out-of-date provisions were to be amended. The Central Committee was empowered to take the initiative in proceeding immediately with the founding of a Third International, which could be built, the resolution said, “only by the worker masses themselves and their revolutionary struggle in their own countries.”²

The road leading Russia to the socialist revolution was defined.

THE PEACEFUL PERIOD OF THE REVOLUTION

The slogan “All Power to the Soviets!”, put forward by the Bolsheviks, did not mean a call to overthrow the Provisional Government.

¹ V.I. Lenin, “The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference...”, *op. cit.*, pp. 311, 308.

² See *The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the RSDLP(B). April 1917, Minutes*, Moscow, 1958, p. 255 (in Russian).

Since the Soviets had struck a bargain with the latter, such a call would have led objectively to a fight against the Soviets as well. Something else was implied, a gradual process which, combining various forms of class struggle, would lead to the desired end. In other words the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" oriented the Party, in the circumstances of the time, on *peaceful development* of the revolution.

The objective basis for a possible peaceful development of the revolution was that the Provisional Government could not use force. The army had got out of its control, had gone over to the side of the people, and was not suitable to suppress the mass action. The police had been dispersed and disarmed during the February fighting. As Lenin said, "the first civil war in Russia has come to an end: we are now advancing towards the second war—the war between imperialism and the armed people. In this transitional period, as long as the armed force is in the hands of the soldiers, as long as Milyukov and Guchkov have not yet resorted to violence, this civil war, so far as we are concerned, turns into peaceful, prolonged, and patient class propaganda. ... So long as the government has not started war, our propaganda remains peaceful."¹

At the same time the popular masses, intoxicated by the successes of the revolution, displayed a "credulous unawareness" and gave the petty-bourgeois compromising parties the chance to act in their name. But although the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks at the head of the Soviets opposed revolutionary reforms in every way, the system of Soviets itself, with the power of re-election and recall really being implemented, made peaceful transfer of leadership to the revolutionary party possible. If state authority had been fully in their hands, Lenin remarked later, a peaceful path of development "would have been the least painful, and it was therefore necessary to fight for it most energetically".²

The Bolsheviks' criticism of the compromising policy of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks then did not rule out the possibility of co-operation with them in the interests of the revolution. The slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" itself created favourable conditions not only for joint action of all the parties in them against the Provisional Government, but also for preventing civil war. As Lenin wrote:

"If there is an absolutely undisputed lesson of the revolution, one fully proved by the facts, it is that only an alliance of the Bolsheviks with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, only an immedi-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference...", *op. cit.*, pp. 236-37.

² V.I. Lenin, "On Slogans", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, 1977, p. 187.

ate transfer of all power to the Soviets would make civil war in Russia impossible."¹

Full power could not be transferred to the Provisional Government without using force against the people; bourgeois and Social-Democratic writers who accuse the Bolsheviks of Blanquism, putschism, and such like sins, prefer to keep silent about that.

The February Revolution and overthrow of the autocracy led to a movement of the broad masses, and raised them to active, independent involvement in political affairs. "Russia at present is seething," Lenin wrote. "Millions and tens of millions of people, who had been politically dormant for ten years and politically crushed by the terrible oppression of tsarism and by inhuman toil for the landowners and capitalists, *have awakened and taken eagerly* to politics."²

Popular initiative was displayed in mass meetings, assemblies, discussions, and demonstrations. It was not "anarchy", as the bourgeoisie described it, but the political freedom won. Spokesmen of the various parties openly defended their programmes and slogans, so that the working people had the chance to compare them. In the developing struggle for the minds and souls of people it became clear what ideas and what actions most corresponded to the objective sense of the movement and most fully reflected the radical interests of the masses themselves.

Lenin and other Bolsheviks often spoke at workers' meetings in Petrograd. At one, in the huge Putilov Works on May 12, he debated with V. M. Chernov, the leader of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and a minister in the Provisional Government. Chernov argued for continuation of the war, called on the Putilov workers to produce more guns for the front, and attacked the Bolsheviks. Then Lenin mounted the platform. An eyewitness described it as follows. "The attention of everyone present was concentrated on the small figure of Ilyich. Lenin spoke passionately and movingly. He told the workers about the horrors of the imperialist war, talked about the billions of superprofits that the capitalists were raking in, getting fat on the world war, and about who this war was benefiting and who needed it." Chernov, Avksentiev, Martov, and other leaders of the petty-bourgeois parties, having forgotten the resolution they had moved, hastily quit the works yard to the shouts of the workers: "Down with the Conciliators!", "Down with the War!"³. Workers who heard

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Russian Revolution and Civil War," *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, 1972, p. 36.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 61.

³ I. Ereemeev, "Lenin and the Putilov Workers", *The Chronicle of Great October. April-October 1917*, Moscow, 1958, pp. 50-51 (in Russian).

Lenin's speech at the Obukhov Works recalled: "After his speech the tasks facing the revolution became astonishingly clear; the verbal fog in which the speakers of all other parties shrouded the workers and soldiers was blown away."¹

In those conditions the Bolsheviks had to cope with a twofold task, viz., on the one hand, to encourage development of the masses' revolutionary initiative in every way and, on the other hand, to steer the spontaneous movements into the channel of organised struggle for the people's main demands, for further advance of the revolution toward transfer of power to the proletariat in alliance with the poorest peasants.

The Bolshevik Party itself, after long years underground, had only 24,000 members at the end of February 1917. On gaining legality it began energetically to draw advanced workers into its ranks; at the end of April it already had more than 100,000 members. The organisations in the major industrial cities grew particularly rapidly: in Petrograd from 2,000 to 16,000, in Moscow from 600 to 7,000, in Ekaterinburg from 40 to 1,700. In July the Party had 240,000 members, and in the autumn 350,000. Its nucleus, around 60 per cent, consisted of the advanced, most class-conscious, and staunchest workers.

The Bolshevik Party, the vanguard of the Russian proletariat, saw its primary task as waging a resolute fight for socialism against the power of capital. To win that inevitably long and difficult fight, the working class had to show its qualities clearly as leader and guide of all the labouring people of town and country, and of both the centre and the periphery of an immense state. It was only possible to train and develop these qualities through day-by-day struggle, and the Party strove to exploit all the varied forms and organisations created by the revolution so as to penetrate deep into the popular masses.

The main arena where the Bolsheviks developed their struggle to influence the masses was the *Soviets*, the working people's most authoritative organisations. In the first months of the revolution there were few Bolsheviks in them: less than 2.4 per cent in the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, 22.8 per cent in the Moscow Soviet of Workers' Deputies, 14 per cent in the Kiev Soviet of Workers' Deputies, and 12.8 per cent in the Kharkov Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.² But the Bolsheviks' idea of power for the Soviets corresponded to the mood even of those strata of the

¹ A.A. Antonov, A.S. Gundorov, E.P. Onufriev, "Lenin Addresses the Workers of the Obukhov Works", *Lenin in October. Reminiscences*, Moscow, 1957, p. 156 (in Russian).

² A.M. Andreev, *The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies on the Eve of the October Revolution. March-October 1917*, Moscow, 1967, p. 77 (in Russian).

working people who were not ready to accept the whole Bolshevik programme. Cases became more and more frequent when by decision of Soviets commissioners of the Provisional Government were dismissed and the Soviets took over their functions. That happened in Kronstadt, Riga, Narva, Podolsk, Orekhovo-Zuevo, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Kovrov, Krasnoyarsk and settlements in the Urals and the Donbass.

In the spring and summer, the Soviets could have taken power painlessly throughout the country because the Government could not resist them. The issue of power was raised at the First Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies convened in Petrograd in June. According to the party affiliation of the 777 (of the 1,090) delegates who declared it, more than two-thirds belonged to the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary Parties, or supported them. The Menshevik I. G. Tsereteli, arguing the need for the Soviets to support the Provisional Government, declared that there was no political party in the country that would say "Give us power". "No party can refuse this," Lenin retorted, "and our Party certainly does not. It is ready to take over full power at any moment." The transfer of power to the revolutionary proletariat with the support of the poorest peasantry would mean the overcoming of anarchy and disruption, curbing of the capitalists, revolutionary struggle for peace "in the surest and most painless forms ever known to mankind".¹ But the Congress turned down the Bolsheviks' demands both for transfer of all power to the Soviets and for ending the war. The Central Executive Committee of the Soviets elected then included 107 Mensheviks, 101 Socialist-Revolutionaries, and 35 Bolsheviks. But each new re-election of Soviets in the localities weakened the position of the conciliatory parties and strengthened the influence of the Bolsheviks. In the Petrograd Soviet, for example, the size of the Bolshevik group quintupled in summer, and in the Kiev Soviet the Bolsheviks got a third of the seats.

The Bolsheviks fought to increase the role and influence of the *trade unions*. They grew rapidly: in March and April 1917 they had 500,000 members, and in October already more than 3 million. The unions united most of the industrial proletariat (in Petrograd 93.9 per cent of the workers, and in Moscow even more)². The metal workers' and textile workers' unions became the biggest and best organised (526,000 and 571,000 members respectively).³ The Mensheviks leading several big trade unions tried to steer their activity onto reformist

¹ V.I. Lenin, "First All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 20, 28,

² *History of Leningrad Workers*, Vol. 2, Leningrad, 1972, p. 24 (in Russian).

³ A.G. Egorova, *The Party and the Trade Unions in the October Revolution*, Moscow, 1970, p. 325 (in Russian).

lines, and insisted on their "neutrality" in the political struggle. That became the main reason for the decline in their influence. By the autumn the Bolsheviks had won many of the unions to their side, which became militant organisations not only acting in defence of the workers' economic interests but also displaying political activity.

In March 1917, alongside the Soviets, works committees began to be set up in enterprises. They were new organisations born of the mass revolutionary initiative. They arose out of strike committees, but their functions were much broader. They were elected at works and shop meetings, united all the workers of the enterprise irrespective of the union they belonged to, and had the job of defending their immediate interests. As their everyday function, the works committees intervened actively in the operation of the mill or factory, enforced revolutionary order, controlled the activity of the employers and management, disrupted attempts by capitalists to hold up production, sometimes even took over management of the enterprise. These committees immediately became a firm bastion of the Bolsheviks.

Conferences of works committees began to play a significant role in the major proletarian centres. At the First Conference of Works Committees in Petrograd in late May and early June, to which 367 works committees sent delegates, three-quarters of the delegates were in support of Bolsheviks. The conference passed a resolution, moved by Lenin, on measures to fight the economic dislocation, which said that success could only be possible if all state power were transferred to the proletarians and semi-proletarians. A Bolshevik, N. A. Skrypnik, was elected chairman of the Central Council of Works Committees, which became their centre for the whole country.

The movement for *workers' control* acquired increasing scope. In the summer of 1917 it involved no less than 2,800,000 workers, i.e. three-quarters of the industrial proletariat of Russia. Control was exercised by works committees and control and management commissions. They blocked the attempts by capitalists to close down enterprises in their fight against the revolution, and to create chaos and anarchy in the economy. Worker auditors checked stocks of raw materials and fuel, kept watch on the despatch of machinery and finished goods from enterprises, audited financial operations, looked into matters of wages and sackings, and organised the guarding of the enterprises. The Bolsheviks attached great significance to the fight for workers' control, and called for it to be introduced immediately, even before power was taken. Its importance was not only in curbing the despotism of capitalists and preventing disruption of industry. During the struggle for workers' control and its implementation, the workers themselves gained managerial skills and political experience, their class consciousness rose, and

their revolutionary initiative broadened. The Bolsheviks saw workers' control as an important means of leading the masses in the struggle for power, since it helped debunk the compromisers, and convinced the workers of the need to put an end to the capitalists' domination.

In the early days after the February Revolution, when the city police and gendarmes disappeared from the streets, their place was taken by detachments of *workers' militia* and armed squads of workers. That, too, was a manifestation of creative revolutionary initiative. The Bolsheviks considered peaceful development of the revolution only possible if the workers and revolutionary soldiers were armed, and counter-revolution deprived of armed support. The revolution had to create its own armed forces capable of frustrating any attempt by reaction to settle with the masses.

The Bolsheviks' call to form a proletarian militia had a broad response everywhere. Nizhni Novgorod workers, for example, wrote into the mandate of their representatives on the Soviet of Workers' Deputies that a people's militia was needed so as to implement democratic demands and consolidate the gains: "The armed people can do everything to carry out the working class's programme. An unarmed people will be defeated and again shackled with strong chains."¹

In the big works of Petrograd the detachments of the workers' militia numbered several hundred persons each. All the Soviets in which the Bolsheviks had a strong position took an active part in organising a workers' militia. The Executive Committee of the Minsk Soviet of Workers' Deputies, having formed a city workers' militia, elected the Bolshevik M. V. Frunze its chief. In Lugansk the works squads were merged into a city workers' group. Squads of workers' militia were formed by the Soviets in Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Krasnoyarsk, and in a number of towns in the Urals and the Donbass. The conciliators opposed the organisation of the militia; where they headed Soviets, therefore, the workers often set up one in spite of them.

Lenin, who followed the formation of the workers' militia closely, considered it was "a measure of tremendous—it will be no exaggeration to say, gigantic and decisive—importance, both practically and in principle. The revolution cannot be made safe, its gains cannot be assured, its further development is *impossible*, until this measure has become general, until it is carried through all over the country."² In a number of places the workers' militia squads arose under the title Red Guard; later the majority began to

¹ *The Revolutionary Movement in Russia after the Overthrow of the Autocracy. Documents and Materials*, Moscow, 1957, pp. 558-59 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "A Proletarian Militia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 179.

be called such. Relying on the Red Guard (workers' militia), the workers guarded enterprises, maintained order in the towns, and saw to proper distribution of foodstuffs. The Soviets enforced their decisions with the help of the Red Guard.

The Bolsheviks paid great attention to work *in the army*, on whose position the fate of the revolution hung. Their winning of the army also meant strengthening of the alliance of workers and the poor peasantry. The Party's military organisation set up in April 1917 guided the political work of army Bolsheviks who brought the programme for peace and solution of the agrarian question to the soldiers, explained the imperialist character of the Provisional Government's policy, and struggled to democratise the army. One of the organisers of the fighting squads of the 1905-1907 Revolution, N. I. Podvoisky, soon became the leader of the Bolshevik military organisation. Bolshevik branches were set up in front-line and rear units and garrisons. The revolutionary seamen formed a Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet (Centrobalt) and elected a Bolshevik sailor, P. E. Dybenko, its chairman. The Bolsheviks dispelled illusions about "revolutionary defence" and exposed the lies by which the bourgeoisie tried to set the soldiers against the workers. The reports of Lenin, Podvoisky, Krylenko and others at the All-Russia Conference of Front-line and Rear Organisations of the RSDLP(B) held in June in Petrograd were devoted to explaining the Party's policy.

The Party's work *in the country* was not limited to putting forward a genuinely revolutionary agrarian programme. Party agitators were sent to explain it on the spot and made use of country and provincial peasant congresses. Many of these adopted resolutions in the summer on putting manorial estates and their farm implements at the disposal of *volost*¹ committees.

The First All-Russia Congress of Peasants' Deputies convened in Petrograd in May 1917, and became a major event. A tense struggle for influence over the peasant masses developed at it between the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who had an absolute majority, and the Bolsheviks. In an "Open Letter to the Delegates" and his speech on the agrarian question, Lenin doggedly advised the peasants to take over all the land immediately, in as organised a fashion as possible, and not permitting damage to property. "Let a decision be taken by the majority," he said, "we want the peasants to obtain the landed estates now, without losing a single month, a single week, or even a single day."² Not without reason one of the Siberian

¹ A *volost* was a subdivision of the county (*uyezd*) division of a province (*guberniya*).—Translator's note.

² V.I. Lenin, "First All-Russia Congress of Peasants' Deputies", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 492.

peasants wrote to the folks back home: "Today I heard the famous Lenin at the Congress, a great mind ... against him the ministers seemed tiny."¹ In the summer a mass peasant movement swept the Central and North-Western regions, the Volga Area, the Ukraine, and the Baltic area.

In the upsurge of the *national liberation movement* that developed in the spring and summer of 1917 in non-Russian areas of the former empire only the Bolsheviks issued a consistently internationalist programme. While striving to bring the nations together, they wanted to do so "not by violence, but exclusively through a free fraternal union" of the workers and all labouring masses. The more democratic the Soviet Republic would be, Lenin considered, "the more powerful will be the force of *voluntary* attraction to such a republic on the part of the working people of *all* nations".² On these principles the Bolsheviks condemned the Provisional Government for having got into a conflict with the Finnish Seim and the Ukrainian Central Rada which were demanding autonomy. While exposing bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism, the Bolshevik Party organisations in the Ukraine, Byelorussia, the Baltic area, the Transcaucasia, Turkestan, and other regions, strove to rally the working people of the various nationalities, Christians and Muslims, and to win the millions of the peasant poor oppressed by tsarism over to the side of the proletariat.

Dissatisfaction with the Provisional Government's policy grew. Continuation of the war and the actions of the bourgeoisie led to further disorganisation of the economy, inflation, and hunger. The insignificant rise in wages won by stubborn strikes was wiped out by the growth of prices. The masses' hopes and expectations remained unrealised. Indignation was vented more and more often in spontaneous mass actions aimed against the Provisional Government. Lenin saw the spontaneity of the rising movement itself as undoubted proof "that it is deeply rooted in the masses, that its roots are firm.... The proletarian revolution is firmly rooted, the bourgeois counter-revolution is without roots—this is what the facts prove."³

Since spontaneous outbursts were inevitable as the revolution developed, the Bolsheviks deemed it their duty to be together with the struggling masses, directing their actions into organised channels and developing their class consciousness. The Party maintained

¹ See V.P. Safronov, *October in Siberia*, Krasnoyarsk, 1962, p. 264 (in Russian).

² See V.I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution", *op. cit.*, p. 73.

³ V.I. Lenin, "The Russian Revolution and Civil War", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 31.

this position, though with varying success, during the three political crises that occurred during the period of dual power.

On 18 April (1 May new style) 1917, Milyukov, the Foreign Minister, sent a note to the governments of Great Britain and France containing an affirmation of the Provisional Government's readiness to wage the war "till victory". The cynical imperialist character of the note evoked a sharp protest from the workers and soldiers, who spontaneously staged an armed demonstration and meeting in front of the Government building, shouting "Down with Milyukov!" The Bolsheviks went along with this movement, trying to direct it onto lines of organised struggle for transfer of all power to the Soviets. The April crisis forced the bourgeoisie to seek a "socialist" cover. As a result, a coalition government was formed, consisting of ten Cadets and Octobrists, and six SRs and Mensheviks. This was the same manoeuvre that had already been tested in Western capitalist countries. Its essence, as Lenin put it, was the bourgeoisie's intention to put the leaders of "socialist democracy" into the position of harmless "*appendages* of a bourgeois government, to shield this government from the people by means of near-socialist Ministers" who would thus take responsibility for its policy.¹

A second political crisis developed in June. On 18 June (1 July) 1917 a half-million-strong peaceful demonstration was held in Petrograd at the graves of victims of the revolution on the Field of Mars. Bolshevik slogans predominated at it: "All Power to the Soviets!", "Down with the Ten Capitalist Ministers!", "Neither Separate Peace with the Germans, Nor Secret Agreements with the Anglo-French Capitalists!". The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks tried in vain to counter these by their own slogans. Political demonstrations under the Bolshevik slogans also took place in Moscow, Minsk, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Kharkov, Tver, and other cities. This crisis was stopped by the offensive mounted by the Russian army at the battle front. It did not bring the Government down, but it did reveal how tense the class struggle had become, since it passed off with considerable swings of the petty-bourgeois strata toward the revolutionary proletariat.

On 4(17) July there was another half-million demonstration in Petrograd under the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!". On the eve of it soldiers angered by the disbandment of revolutionary units spontaneously took to the streets with slogans of "Down with the Provisional Government!" and "All Power to the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies!". They were joined by the workers of several factories. The Bolsheviks considered the action premature,

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Great Withdrawal", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 61.

because the crisis had not yet come to a head in the provinces, and especially in the army. While taking part in the demonstration they tried to give it an organised, peaceful character. Lenin, who addressed the demonstrators from the balcony of the Kshesinskaya Mansion, called on them to be restrained, tenacious, and vigilant.

In the Taurida Palace, 90 representatives from 54 enterprises moved that the joint session of the Central Executive Committee and the Executive Committee of the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies should take full power. They declared: "We trust the Soviet but not those the Soviet trusts." The leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, however, turned down the masses' demands, declaring the demonstration a "Bolshevik plot". While on the way to the palace the demonstrators had been provocatively fired on by counter-revolutionaries. The streets of the capital ran with the blood of workers and soldiers: 56 persons had been killed and 650 wounded. The Government proclaimed a state of emergency in Petrograd, and troops summoned from the front began to disarm the workers and revolutionary soldiers and sailors. Arrests began, and the office and printing plant of *Pravda* were smashed up.

Anti-government actions took place as well in Moscow, Kiev, Riga, Orekhovo-Zuevo, Nizhni Novgorod and Krasnoyarsk. The Central Committee of the RSDLP(B) appealed to working people, who had shown their will, to call off the demonstrations. Nevertheless the new coalition government headed by the Socialist-Revolutionary A. F. Kerensky began repressive measures against the Bolsheviks. On 9(22) July the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, and the Executive Committee of the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, in which Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks predominated, declared the Provisional Government a "government of salvation of the Revolution" and voted it unlimited powers to fight revolutionary actions.

In the article "Lessons of the Revolution", Lenin described the road taken by the petty-bourgeois parties as follows: "Having once set foot on the ladder of compromise with the bourgeoisie, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks slid irresistibly downwards, to rock bottom. On February 28, in the Petrograd Soviet, they promised conditional support to the bourgeois government. On May 6 they saved it from collapse and allowed themselves to be made its servants and defenders by agreeing to an offensive.... On June 19 they approved the resumption of the predatory war. On July 3 they consented to the summoning of reactionary troops, which was the beginning of their complete surrender of power to the Bonapartists. Down the ladder, step by step.

"This shameful finale of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties was not fortuitous but a consequence of the economic

status of the small owners, the petty bourgeoisie, as has been repeatedly borne out by experience in Europe."¹

The Provisional Government could now, without reckoning with the Soviets and aided and abetted, moreover, by their Socialist-Revolutionary cum Menshevik leadership, use armed force against the masses. Dan, one of the Menshevik leaders, frankly declared at a session of the Central Executive Committee: "What Comrade Kerensky called on us to do, we have already done. We are not only ready to support the Provisional Government, we have not only delegated full power to it, we are demanding that it make full use of this power."²

The July crisis put an end to dual power in favour of counter-revolution, which took the offensive everywhere. The Soviets were turned into an appendage of the Provisional Government. Peaceful transfer of power to them, which the Bolsheviks had been fighting for, became impossible. It was thus demonstrated once more that the policy of conciliation with the bourgeoisie, unprincipled yielding to it, only weakened the position of the working class, and profited only its class enemy.

PROBLEMS OF THE APPROACH AND TRANSITION TO THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

On the evening of 5(18) July, 1917, Lenin, barely escaping arrest, had to go underground. While hiding for three months outside Petrograd, out of the thick of the revolutionary events, he kept in very close touch with the Party and guided its activity. In that time he wrote around 50 articles, letters, and pamphlets, including such programmatic works as *The State and Revolution*, *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*, *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?*, and *Revision of the Party Programme*. In them he substantiated the historical necessity and inevitability of a socialist revolution in Russia, and developed both theoretical and practical political issues of the *approach* and *transition* to this revolution.

In August 1917, further analysing the relation between imperialism, war, state-monopoly capitalism and the socialist revolution, Lenin wrote: "The war has speeded up developments fantastically, aggravated the crisis of capitalism to the utmost, and confronted the peoples with making an immediate choice between destruction

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Lessons of the Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 241-42.

² *Novaya Zhizn*, 14(27) July 1917.

and immediate determined strides towards socialism."¹ Evidence of that was, for example, the introduction of universal labour conscription in Europe and compulsory syndication. A month later Lenin added to this idea that state monopoly was objectively generating an alternative: either a reactionary, bureaucratic state would run production in the interest of the landowners and capitalists, or the revolutionary-democratic state would take charge of it, and then the position would be radically altered, then that "*is a step towards socialism*".

In that context Lenin also pictured the socialist system itself in a new way, its general idea that far inevitably remaining abstract among Marxists. He saw it as a new system growing directly out of the old one in concrete, specific conditions created by real imperialism and the world war: "For socialism is merely the next step forward from state-capitalist monopoly. Or, in other words, socialism is merely state-capitalist monopoly *which is made to serve the interests of the whole people* and has to that extent *ceased* to be capitalist monopoly."² From this dialectical connection between the old and new qualities Lenin deduced very important proof of the inevitability of a revolutionary outbreak: "There is no middle course here. The objective process of development is such that it is *impossible* to advance from *monopolies* (and the war has magnified their number, role and importance tenfold) without advancing towards socialism."³

A result of these reflections was a generalisation in which the *economic* substantiation reinforced the necessity of *political*, revolutionary action: "Imperialist war is the eve of socialist revolution. And this not only because the horrors of the war give rise to proletarian revolt—no revolt can bring about socialism unless the economic conditions for socialism are ripe—but because state-monopoly capitalism is a complete *material* preparation for socialism, the *threshold* of socialism, a rung on the ladder of history between which and the rung called socialism *there are no intermediate rungs*."⁴

That conclusion, needless to say, did not alter, or replace, the root proposition accepted by all revolutionary Marxists that there is a *transition period* between capitalist and socialist society, or as Marx put it, "the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other". For it was from that proposition that it followed that it was "a political transition period in which the state can be

¹ V.I. Lenin, "From a Publicist's Diary", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 282.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 362.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 363.

nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*".¹ Lenin not only accepted this idea, but was at that time defending and developing it vigorously in a polemic against Kautsky.² As is clear from the context, when speaking of the absence of an "intermediate rung" he wanted to stress another point, viz., that imperialism (or state-monopoly capitalism) was so ripe for socialist revolution that there would be no economic barriers to society's entering upon this transition period between capitalism and socialism once the proletariat had taken power; immediate steps in that direction would become possible.

In passing from general, fundamental considerations to the concrete circumstances in Russia, Lenin not only did not underestimate its comparative backwardness but, on the contrary, pointed to its greater backwardness as one of the reasons why the revolution had begun earlier in Russia than in the countries of the West.³ It is incalculable how much paper the enemies of Lenin and socialism have wasted trying to turn that statement against the Russian Revolution and its leader. A special "doctrine of backwardness" was invented and ascribed to Lenin, that put Russia in the same rank with China, India, and other countries at a pre-capitalist level, so as to prove "illegitimacy" of the fight for socialism in Russia, and "fallacy" of the whole strategy of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party. It has become fashionable even to accuse Lenin of underestimating that in Russia, allegedly, the "asiatic mode of production" predominated.⁴ But Lenin always had in mind the *relative* backwardness of tsarist Russia, stressing that it was a "medium-developed" (or "medium-weak") capitalist country in which a highly concentrated and monopolised industry was the bed-fellow of a grotesquely backward, small-commodity countryside.⁵

Russia's comparative backwardness, in Lenin's thought, not only did not rule out the possibility and necessity for it to fight for socialism but on the contrary made it *easier to begin* the revolution. The point was the "utmost decay of tsarism" which had caused universal hatred of it in all strata of the population, and the lack of economic strength and political experience of the Russian bour-

¹ Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme", Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, p. 26.

² See V.I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 459.

³ See V.I. Lenin, "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", *op. cit.*, p. 364.

⁴ See, for example, R. Dutschke, *Versuch Lenin auf die Füße zu stellen*, West Berlin, 1974.

⁵ *Lenin Miscellany XI*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1929, p. 397 (in Russian); V.I. Lenin, "Political Notes" *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 442.

geoisie which depended on government orders and subsidies, truckled to tsarism, and was afraid to look republican even in words. Other factors were the war which had brought Russia military defeat, vast human casualties, loss of territory, economic dislocation, disorganisation of transport, and impending famine.¹ The unresolved character of all the main general democratic tasks in Russia had further revolutionised the peasant and national liberation movements. The mass impact, for all its diversity, was therefore very great. And because there was an organising and guiding force, the revolutionary proletariat and its militant party, the Russian Revolution was a shattering force capable of advancing beyond the overthrow of the autocracy to the establishment of worker and peasant power.

We must add here that, in Lenin's view, "the war in the past three years has pushed us a good thirty years ahead",² and created a quite developed military-governmental industrial complex. But the revolution had pushed the country even further and faster, and "resulted in Russia catching up with the advanced countries in a few months, as far as her *political* system is concerned". As the experience of those countries demonstrated, it could take decades to make such progress without a revolution. But there remained a harsh problem for Russia: "either perish or overtake and outstrip the advanced countries *economically* as well"³. The key to a really scientific understanding of the very complicated issue of the preconditions for the socialist revolution in a country lay in this distinguishing between, and at the same time uniting of, the political and economic planes.

Lenin had come to the conclusion, even earlier, from study of the disparate and spasmodic development of various countries in the imperialist epoch, that victory of socialism was possible initially in a few countries, or even in one. Now, in the circumstances of the developing Russian Revolution, there were no longer any doubts about what country it could be. The most burning issue, however, demanding an answer, was whether Russia was capable of taking the road of socialist revolution *first* on the economic plane as well as on the political one. In that case Russia's comparative backwardness would, evidently, not make it easier but, rather, complicate the sweeping revolutionary transformation of society and make it very difficult.

Lenin analysed this matter thoroughly. Unlike reformists he did not seek justification in the country's relative backwardness for

¹ See V.I. Lenin, "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", *op. cit.*, p. 368.

² V.I. Lenin, "From a Publicist's Diary", *op. cit.*, p. 283.

³ V.I. Lenin, "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", *op. cit.*, p. 368.

rejecting the socialist revolution, or postponing it to the distant future. On the contrary, he considered it the job of revolutionaries to find such forms and methods of advancing to socialism as would correspond to Russia's real conditions. He continued to work along the line already planned in the decisions of the April Conference, viz., seeking the concrete, gradual "steps toward socialism" in a country faced with inexorably advancing economic dislocation.

In the situation of revolutionary tension capitalist circles were deliberately letting the economy go to wrack and ruin, and aggravating the economic chaos by lockouts. P. P. Ryabushinsky, a major Russian monopolist, cynically proclaimed at a commercial and industrial congress in August: "The gaunt hand of famine and people's poverty is needed to grip the throat of the people's false friends, the members of various committees and councils."¹ And the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who had joined the Government, though seeing the inevitability of the impending catastrophe, nevertheless displayed complete inactivity. Lenin brought out the class sense of that: "Control, supervision and accounting are the prime requisites for combating catastrophe and famine. This is indisputable and universally recognised. And it is just what is *not being done* from fear of encroaching on the supremacy of the landowners and capitalists, on their immense, fantastic and scandalous profits."²

But was there a chance in Russia for "the swiftest and most radical transition to a superior mode of production"? Lenin considered that issue on two planes. On the international plane he thought it positive that "we have before us the experience of a large number of advanced countries, the fruits of their technology and culture. We are receiving moral support from the war protest that is growing in Europe, from the atmosphere of the mounting world-wide workers' revolution". On the domestic plane he noted first of all the favourable political situation: "We are being inspired and encouraged by a revolutionary-democratic freedom which is extremely rare in time of imperialist war."

The heart of the matter, he thought, was that "it is impossible to stand still in history in general, and in war-time in particular. We must either advance or retreat. It is *impossible* in twentieth-century Russia, which has won a republic and democracy in a revolutionary way, to go forward without *advancing* towards socialism, without taking *steps* towards it (steps conditioned and determined

¹ *The Economic Situation in Russia on the Eve of the Great October Socialist Revolution. Documents and Materials (March-October 1917)*, Part I, Moscow-Leningrad, 1957, p. 201.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", *op. cit.*, p. 328.

by the level of technology and culture)."¹ But that could not be done without transitional measures toward socialism and "combined types" in the economy of the transitional period.²

Who could take these necessary steps? Only the Soviets, becoming the really revolutionary-democratic authority, could create "a state which in a revolutionary way abolishes *all* privileges and does not fear to introduce the fullest democracy in a revolutionary way"³.

And it is with this state structure that the state-monopoly capitalism existing in Russia would be driven inexorably toward socialism. The issue of the development of the revolution into a socialist one was therefore firmly rooted in the question of power, in the question of the *character and role of the state*.

On the other hand, class stratification, inevitable during any bourgeois revolution, leads to a problem of state power. The united revolutionary democracy had in practice exhausted itself with overthrow of the autocracy. During the next half-year the predominant and governing petty-bourgeois parties of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks displayed their complete incapacity to tackle the most important issues of the revolution. Only the revolutionary working class, led by the Bolshevik Party, alone exhibited the will to fight for power for itself and its natural allies, the poorest peasants.

The question of the state moved to the centre of attention from another aspect as well. In the early days of the revolution the Bolsheviks saw the Soviets as the embryo of a state *of a new type*, suitable both for consistent tackling of general democratic issues, and for taking steps toward socialism. The workers, soldiers and peasants considered the Soviets their agencies. But the advantages of the Republic of Soviets, unprecedented in history, compared with the traditional parliamentary democratic republic, had to be substantiated theoretically on the basis of revolutionary practice.

In that connection Lenin considered it particularly important, in the autumn of 1917, to carry out his old idea of re-establishing the theory of Marxism about the state, distorted by the opportunists, linking it with definition of the proletariat's tasks in the developing revolution. His book *The State and Revolution*, aimed against opportunism and anarchism, remained unfinished in the hectic time of the eve of the October Revolution. Nevertheless it played an outstanding role in consolidating the revolutionary proletariat's gains.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Impending Catastrophe...", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 368, 362-63.

² V. I. Lenin, "Revision of the Party Programme", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 172.

³ V. I. Lenin. "The Impending Catastrophe...", *op. cit.*, p. 361.

In the revolutionary situation Lenin's attention was, naturally, drawn to developing the views of Marx and Engels on smashing the old state machine in the course of a popular revolution, and on the role of the new proletarian power during the transition from capitalism to socialism. He specially emphasised their dialectical approach to the problem of the relation between bourgeois and proletarian democracy when they analysed the experience of the Paris Commune.

After pointing out such measures of the Commune as the abolition of the standing army, electivity of all officials, and their replaceability, Lenin summed up as follows: "The Commune, therefore, appears to have replaced the smashed state machine 'only' by fuller democracy.... But as a matter of fact this 'only' signifies a gigantic replacement of certain institutions by other institutions of a fundamentally different type. This is exactly a case of 'quantity being transformed into quality': democracy, introduced as fully and consistently as is at all conceivable, is transformed from bourgeois into proletarian democracy."

Then, adding a fourth measure to the Commune's three, viz., "the reduction of the remuneration of *all* servants of the state to the level of *workmen's wages*", Lenin stressed: "This shows more clearly than anything else the *turn* from bourgeois to proletarian democracy, from the democracy of the oppressors to that of the oppressed classes, from the state as a '*special force*' for the suppression of a particular class to the suppression of the oppressors by the *general force* of the majority of the people—the workers and the peasants."¹

When speaking of the electivity and removability of all officials and a ceiling on their payment, Lenin again noted that such measures led to "the interesting boundary line at which consistent democracy, on the one hand, is *transformed* into socialism and, on the other, *demand*s socialism". Just as the Commune replaced the standing army by the arming of the workers, Lenin saw the people's militia as a factor stimulating the transition to socialism: "*Such* a degree of democracy implies overstepping the boundaries of bourgeois society and beginning its socialist reorganisation. If really *all* take part in the administration of the state, capitalism cannot retain its hold."

The development of democracy, however, does not march forward simply, directly, and smoothly to more and more democracy, and then to socialism, as liberals and opportunists picture it. It is impossible to pass from capitalism to socialism without a *quali-*

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 424, 425.

tative leap, without a socialist revolution. All the Commune's measures, Lenin considered, served "as a bridge leading from capitalism to socialism", because they united the interests of the workers and the majority of the peasants. They seemed to apply only to "the reorganisation of the state, the purely political reorganisation of society; but, of course, they acquire their full meaning and significance only in connection with the 'expropriation of the expropriators' either being accomplished or in preparation, i.e., with the transformation of capitalist private ownership of the means of production into social ownership."¹ In another place Lenin pointed out that "to develop democracy *to the utmost*, to find the *forms* for this development, to test them *by practice*, and so forth—all this is one of the component tasks of the struggle for the social revolution. Taken separately, no kind of democracy will bring socialism. But in actual life democracy will never be 'taken separately'; it will be 'taken together' with other things, it will exert its influence on economic life as well, will stimulate *its* transformation; and in its turn it will be influenced by economic development, and so on. This is the dialectics of living history."

Taking Marx's idea of the transition period as his starting point, Lenin stressed that development from capitalism to socialism "proceeds through the dictatorship of the proletariat, and cannot do otherwise, for the *resistance* of the capitalist exploiters cannot be *broken* by anyone else or in any other way." Meanwhile, the dictatorship of the proletariat "cannot result merely in an expansion of democracy. *Simultaneously* with an immense expansion of democracy, which *for the first time* becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people", the dictatorship of the proletariat would have to enforce "a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists". Their resistance would have to be suppressed, and "there is no freedom and no democracy where there is suppression and where there is violence".²

But the substance of the dictatorship of the proletariat is not just coercion of the exploiters. In order to cope with its constructive tasks it needs maximum initiative and activity of the masses in the management of the state and the economy. The building of socialism is a business of enormous difficulty, even though capitalism, by creating large-scale, centralised production and management, has made the organisation of accounting and control accessible to the majority of the educated population. Wrote Lenin: "Abolishing the bureaucracy at once, everywhere and completely, is out of the question. It is a utopia. But to *smash* the old bureaucracy machine

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution", *op. cit.*, pp. 457, 425, 477, 426.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 457-58, 466, 466-67.

at once and to begin immediately to construct a new one that will make possible the gradual abolition of all bureaucracy ... is the direct and immediate task of the revolutionary proletariat." Supervisors and bookkeepers, technicians of all sorts, kinds, and degrees should forfeit their position of a privileged caste, and be turned into responsible, replaceable, modestly paid employees.¹

Continuing that idea in other works of this same time Lenin wrote that the main difficulty of the proletarian revolution was to exercise the most precise accounting and control on a national scale, *workers' control* over the production and distribution of goods. Explaining why the Bolsheviks put the slogan of workers' control always *alongside* the dictatorship of the proletariat, and always *immediately after* it, he proceeded to the point that the capitalist state had, besides a predominantly "oppressive" apparatus (army, police, bureaucracy), an apparatus that performed the work of accounting: "This apparatus must not, and should not, be smashed. It must be wrested from the control of the capitalists; the capitalists and the wires they pull must be *cut off, lopped off, chopped away from* this apparatus; it must be *subordinated* to the proletarian Soviets; it must be expanded, made more comprehensive and nationwide."² The proletarian state would need, experienced organisers of production; it would need more engineers, agronomists, technicians, and scientific experts. And in order to attract them, Lenin wrote, it would be necessary to preserve higher pay for their work during the transition period.

In putting forward and defending views permeated with deep faith in the creative capacities of the broadest masses of the people, but, at the same time, without exaggerating the real level of their education and cultural standards, Lenin maintained that there might even be a certain return to "primitive" democracy during the transition period, but that would not be so terrible. Rejection of bourgeois parliamentarianism (at that time there was no other kind) by no means signified rejection of representative institutions in general. The whole nub was for the elected representatives not to be cut off from the people and themselves to work. Lenin saw the advantages of the system of Soviets as a new constitutional authority, as the second political form of the dictatorship of the proletariat (after the Paris Commune), in their close link with the masses, and their greater democracy. By providing leadership of the masses by the proletarian vanguard, they made it possible to unite the advantages of parliamentarianism with those of immediate, direct democracy. And, he concluded, "compared with the bour-

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 430-31.

² V.I. Lenin, "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 105-106.

geois parliamentary system, this is an advance in democracy's development which is of world-wide, historic significance."¹

In the autumn of 1917 all the political trends of the day from the Cadets to the "quarter-Bolsheviks" of the *Novaya Zhizn* newspaper, unanimously considered that the Bolsheviks either would not venture to take over full power in the country alone, or would be unable to hold it for even a short time. Answering them in the article *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?*, Lenin examined the arguments of his opponents and the sceptics one by one and showed their insolvency. Summing up a comprehensive analysis of the economic and political outlook for Russia to advance in the vanguard of mankind to a new social system, he wrote these prophetic words: "Justice alone, the mere anger of the people against exploitation, would never have brought them onto the true path of socialism. But now that, thanks to capitalism, the material apparatus of the big banks, syndicates, railways, and so forth, has grown, now that the immense experience of the advanced countries has accumulated a stock of engineering marvels, the employment of which is being *hindered* by capitalism, now that the class-conscious workers have built up a party of a quarter of a million members to systematically lay hold of this apparatus and set it in motion with the support of all the working and exploited people—now that these conditions *exist*, no power on earth can prevent the Bolsheviks, *if they do not allow themselves to be scared* and if they succeed in taking power, from retaining it until the triumph of the world socialist revolution."²

The ideas Lenin put forward on the eve of the October Revolution concerning the relation of democracy and socialism, and the economic and socio-political problems of the transition from capitalism to socialism have lost none of their importance in our day; they, moreover, have acquired new meaning and a new ring. Lenin's legacy is an invaluable example of the combination of penetrating theoretical analysis of the development of the capitalist mode of production and practical development of the strategy and tactics of the fight for the socialist revolution. It remains an inexhaustible source of ideas for the contemporary revolutionary movement.

STEERING FOR AN ARMED UPRISING

The violence they resorted to against the revolutionary masses in the days of the July crisis put the leaders of the conciliatory parties

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?", *op. cit.*, p. 104.

² *Ibid.*, p. 130.

on a par with open counter-revolutionaries. The Provisional Government won by means that undermined the foundations of its authority, i.e. the masses' instinctive confidence and their class-collaborationist illusions. But it did not achieve any serious weakening of the revolutionary forces. The Bolsheviks were able to retreat in time and withdraw their main cadres from danger.

The Provisional Government, having established single power by force, ended the possibility of peaceful development of the revolution. The spokesmen of the bourgeoisie and landowners increased their pressure, declaring: "There is only one road—strong and firm authority". Milyukov demanded abolition of the "multipower situation of spontaneous and self-styled committees exercising their own full will".¹ The Government introduced the death penalty at the front. In that situation, an armed clash between the revolutionary forces and the counter-revolutionaries became inevitable.

The 6th Congress of the Bolshevik Party, held in July-August 1917 in Petrograd, worked in semi-legal conditions. Lenin was not present, but his works and his theses on the political situation underlay the Congress' decisions. The resolution on the political situation said that "at the present time peaceful development and a painless transfer of power to the Soviets have become impossible because power has already passed in fact into the hands of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie". The task of the Russian working class and of the poorest strata of town and country was therefore "to strain every effort to take over state power and direct it, in alliance with the revolutionary proletariat of the advanced countries, to peace and the socialist reconstruction of society."²

After discussion, Lenin's proposal to suspend the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" was adopted, since under the leadership of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries they had been turned into docile tools of the Provisional Government. That did not mean, however, a rejection of the Soviets in general; the Bolsheviks had to defend all mass organisations of the workers against the counter-revolution, above all the Soviets, works committees, and soldiers' and peasants' committees; in many proletarian centres the Soviets remained agencies of revolutionary power. The congress adopted a course of organising and preparing all revolutionary forces for the moment when a national crisis and the deepening of the mass struggle would provide the conditions for a successful armed uprising.

This new orientation of the Party and the line of armed uprising adopted by it, were the answer to the change in the situation, the

¹ *The Bourgeoisie and Landowners in 1917*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1932, pp. 193, 214 (in Russian).

² *The 6th Congress of the RSDLP (Bolsheviks). August 1917. Minutes*, Moscow, 1958, pp. 256-57 (in Russian).

development of a tactic that corresponded to the new situation.

"Events took a turn that sent the Russian revolution along a different, non-peaceful way. But the very fact that he posed the question of the possibility in principle, of the revolution developing along one of two ways is in itself an achievement of Lenin's thinking which is meaningful to this very day."¹

The counter-revolution, having resorted to violence in July, continued along that road, striving to establish a military dictatorship in the country. The choice for dictator was General L. G. Kornilov, well-known for his reactionary views, appointed Commander-in-Chief in July. A counter-revolutionary conspiracy was hatched: revolutionary-minded units were being disbanded at the front, and at the same time shock battalions were being formed to fight the revolution. On August 25, General Kornilov moved loyal troops to Petrograd and demanded that all military and civil authority be transferred to him.

Kerensky, the head of the Provisional Government, who had been involved in this conspiracy in its early stages, dissociated himself from Kornilov at the last moment and removed him from the post of C-in-C. Kerensky's vacillations reflected the deep confusion in the ranks of the conciliatory parties. While at the top they were conspiring directly or indirectly with the counter-revolution, the masses by no means wanted to see the power of the military restored.

The Bolsheviks played the main role in rebuffing the forces of counter-revolution. The revolutionary regiments and workers' brigades of Petrograd moved to meet Kornilov's troops. Agitators penetrated the latter and incited the soldiers to refuse to march on Petrograd. The mutiny was a complete fiasco.

During the fight against Kornilov a serious shift occurred in the mood of the workers and soldiers. It had begun before the mutiny and the defeat of the mutiny made the change irreversible. "The soldiers are increasingly coming over to our side," the Bolshevik committee in Wenden wrote to the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the RSDLP(B) on 11 August. "Animosity against the counter-revolution is growing. The Socialist-Revolutionaries are beginning to talk 'Bolshevik' language with the soldiers ... but the soldiers say: if you agree with the Bolsheviks then there's no need for us to follow you, we'll go straight to the Bolsheviks."

A letter from the Vladimir Province communicated that "the Kornilov days have finally cured" all illusions and that now "the workers are completely under the influence of the Bolsheviks". The secretary of the Donets-Krivoi Rog Provincial Committee, F. A. Artem (Ser-

¹ L.I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course. Speeches and Articles*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972, pp. 259-60.

geyev), also wrote about this. The South-Western Provincial Committee reported in mid-September that in the armies of that front "the revolutionary mood is growing from day to day.... In many units whole companies when asked, 'Are there any Bolsheviks among you?', reply: 'We're all Bolsheviks'."¹

The activity of the Soviets revived everywhere. As a result of by-elections for the Petrograd city and district Soviets the position of the Bolsheviks was significantly strengthened in the capital. I.G. Egorov, a worker at the Putilov Works, became chairman of the Peterhof District Soviet, and S.S. Zorin, a worker of the Sestroretsk Works, headed the Sestroretsk District Soviet.

On August 31 the Petrograd Soviet passed a Bolshevik resolution on power and 10 days later the Bolsheviks won leadership in the Soviet. On September 5 the same resolution was passed by the Moscow Soviet, and its Executive Committee was re-elected, with V. P. Nogin, member of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, becoming chairman of the Executive. In the course of September 1 alone, 126 local Soviets declared their support of transfer of all power to the Soviets. A leading Bolshevik in the Caucasus, S.G. Shahumyan, wrote from Baku: "The Bolshevisation observable throughout Russia has also manifested itself on a broadest scale in our oil kingdom.... Yesterday's bosses of the situation, the Mensheviks, don't dare show themselves in the workers' districts."²

With many Soviets declaring themselves against political collaboration with the bourgeoisie, possibilities of a peaceful development of the revolution again opened up. On August 31 the Bolshevik Central Committee appealed to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets to remove the Cadets and form a government of representatives of the proletariat and peasantry. The Petrograd and Moscow Soviets voted for this proposal. The Bolsheviks were ready to compromise and support a Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik government that would ensure transfer of power to the Soviets. "Now, and only now," Lenin wrote, "perhaps *during only a few days* or a week or two, such a government could be set up and consolidated in a perfectly peaceful way." The Bolsheviks were ready to make this compromise solely for the sake of peaceful development of the revolution—an opportunity "*extremely rare in history and extremely valuable*".³ But the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks rejected the proposal, and the last such opportunity was missed. There

¹ *Correspondence of the Secretariat of the CC RSDLP(B) with Local Party Organisations. March-October 1917. Collection of Documents*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1957, pp. 203, 230, 237, 443 (in Russian).

² S.G. Shahumyan, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, (1917-1918), Moscow, 1958, p.95 (in Russian).

³ See V.I. Lenin, "On Compromise", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 308-309.

remained only the road of armed struggle for power of the Soviets.

At that time the mass action reached an unprecedented scale. The working class was forging ahead. While in the first half of the year strikes had arisen mainly on economic grounds and were unconcerted, now, in the autumn, they began to affect whole industries and had a predominantly political character. Political demands were put forward during many of the strikes in the Ukraine in the second half of 1917. In the Urals, there were 209 strikes from July through October, of them 60 economic, 71 political, and 78 with both economic and political demands. The number of strikers in the Urals was 138,144 of whom 112,200 took part in political strikes, 7,220 in mixed strikes and 18,724 in purely economic ones. The slogans of the Urals general political strike of September 1, in which more than 110,000 workers took part, were "Immediate Convening of the All-Russia Congress of Soviets!", "Down with the Counter-revolutionary Dictatorship!" and "Long Live the Proletarian Revolution!". At the end of September there were general strikes of railwaymen and Baku oil workers; the mass strikes of the miners of the Donbass in September-October involved up to 280,000 men.¹ The miners confiscated several pits, and arrested their owners for refusing to meet the demands of workers' control. The Provisional Government sent troops there to suppress the action. In August a strike of Moscow tanners began for a revision of wage rates. It was supported in a number of other towns, and in September became a national strike. At the beginning of October the tanners passed a resolution on transfer of all power to the Soviets and demanded the taking over of enterprises whose owners were unwilling to conclude collective agreements with the workers. More than 100,000 workers took part in the railwaymen's general strike. In October a strike of the textile workers of the Central Industrial Region involved around 300,000. The metal workers of Kharkov, Tula, Nizhny Novgorod, and other cities went on strike. Everywhere the demand for transfer of power to the Soviets was in the foreground.

Peasants were being drawn more and more actively into the revolutionary movement. Their dissatisfaction and anger rose as they saw that no solution of the agrarian question was forthcoming from the Provisional Government. The Socialist-Revolutionary Minister of Agriculture, S. L. Maslov, introduced a land bill that simply proposed recording privately-owned properties. "The S.R. Party," Lenin wrote in this connection, "has deceived the peasants: it has crawled away from its own land bill and has adopted the plan of

¹ See I.I. Mints, *History of the Great October Revolution*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1978, pp. 711-13 (in Russian).

the landowners and Cadets.”¹ The Bolshevik Party organisations sent workers and revolutionary soldiers to the villages to call on the peasants to take the land from the landlords immediately. In the autumn of 1917 the peasant movement embraced more than 90 per cent of the uyezds of the European part of Russia and developed into a peasant uprising. Even those peasants who had voted in the Soviets for the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in practice followed the calls of the Bolsheviks and seized landlords’ land and implements without authorisation. In September and October there were more than 3,500 agrarian conflicts in six regions, including 1,349 in the Central Agricultural Region and 1,670 in the Volga Area. They were distinguished by mass action and the acute struggle characteristic of a peasant war (armed seizures, destruction, burning down of manor houses). Many of the peasant actions had an anti-kulak, as well as an anti-landlord character. In the Simbirsk, Kazan and Saratov provinces, for example, more than a third of all the actions were directed against kulaks and big farmers, breakaways from the village community. The Kerensky Government sent punitive expeditions. Yet, that could not lower the tension of the peasant struggle. Moreover, it demonstrated that the Government was the enemy of the peasantry.

Already in August 1917 the *Izvestia* of the All-Russia Soviet of Peasant Deputies published a “basic mandate” compiled from 242 mandates of local Soviets, that demanded abolition of private property in land without compensation, confiscation of estates and equitable land tenure. The Socialist-Revolutionary Party, however, though it considered itself the spokesman of the peasants’ interests, did not support this programme. The Party itself entered a grave crisis. In the autumn of 1917 a left wing emerged, dissatisfied with the leadership’s policy. It won a majority in the Petrograd, Voronezh, and other organisations and in fact formed a new party of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, which demanded transfer of all land to land committees and its immediate socialisation. As Lenin stressed, however, only the revolutionary proletariat led by the Bolshevik Party toward the overthrow of capitalism could in fact implement the programme of the peasant poor set out in 242 mandates.²

In the army, especially on fronts close to Petrograd and Moscow, bolshevisation was making rapid strides. The bureau of the Bolshevik military organisations in the 12th Army stationed near Petrograd reported to the Central Committee in the middle of September: “Our organisation is growing daily; the vast majority of the troops of the 12th Army are on our side. Whole regiments have joined us.” The

¹ V.I. Lenin, “Socialist-Revolutionary Party Cheats the Peasants Once Again”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 228.

² V.I. Lenin, “From a Publicist’s Diary”, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

South-Western provincial committee reported on the militant mood of the soldiers of the 8th Army, who unanimously supported the Bolsheviks' demands and met the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks with catcalls: "You Kornilovites are selling out the Revolution."¹

The liberation struggle of the non-Russian population of Russia was mounting. Lenin wrote in September: "The policy of annexation and open violence pursued by the Bonapartist Kerensky and Co. towards the non-sovereign nations of Russia has borne fruit. Wide sections of the people of the oppressed nations (i.e., including the mass of the petty bourgeoisie) trust the proletariat of Russia more than they do the bourgeoisie, for here history has brought to the fore the struggle for liberation of the oppressed nations against the oppressing nations. The bourgeoisie has despicably betrayed the cause of freedom of the oppressed nations; the proletariat is faithful to the cause of freedom."² In Latvia, Estonia and Byelorussia the Bolsheviks had considerable success; in the Ukraine, the Transcaucasia and Central Asia they were fighting bourgeois nationalists in very difficult conditions.

The uniting of the proletarian movement with the general democratic revolutionary streams, viz., the peasant fight against the landlords and the liberation movement of the oppressed nations, gave the struggle a country-wide character and irresistible force. The authorities of the bourgeois government were losing control. The Cadet party was politically bankrupt. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks were in a state of confusion. Economic disaster was imminent, with stagnation, hunger and inflation rapidly becoming worse.

The 2nd Congress of Soviets was due to meet in September, but the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leadership of the Central Executive Committee, not reckoning to get a majority, decided to postpone it. Instead, an All-Russia Democratic Conference was convened on September 14 in Petrograd. Around 1,500 delegates took part, mainly from organisations under the influence of conciliators and the bourgeoisie (city *dumas*, *zemstvos*³ and co-operative societies), while the Soviets were allocated only 230 mandates. There were 136 Bolshevik delegates. The purpose of the conference was to decide the issue of power through the forming of a new coalition government. The conciliators counted, by means of fiddling and manoeuvres, and exploiting parliamentary illusions, on deflecting the masses

¹ *Correspondence of the Secretariat of the CC RSDLP(B)*, Vol. I, pp. 349, 448.

² V.I. Lenin, "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?", *op. cit.*, p. 98.

³ A *duma* was an old-type municipal council and a *zemstvo* a rural county and provincial council, elected on a limited, class-differentiated franchise.—*Translator's note.*

from the revolutionary struggle and blocking further development of the revolution. But the idea of a coalition with the Cadets failed: three-quarters of the representatives of the workers' Soviets, works committees and trade unions voted against it and were supported by the representatives of peasant Soviets and ethnic organisations. The Provisional Council of the Russian Republic (the Preparliament) elected by the presiding board of the Democratic Conference and later supplemented with government-nominated bourgeois elements became a consultative body under the Provisional Government. Its composition did not correspond to the real balance of forces, and it was unable to take a concerted decision on any serious issue. That was further evidence that not only the masses were unwilling to live in the old way but, in addition, those at the top could no longer rule in the old way.

"The crisis has matured", Lenin wrote at the end of September. The turning point of the revolution had come. Peasant insurrections were growing in the countryside, the masses of the soldiers and workers were tending toward the Bolsheviks, and the whole future of the Russian and international revolution was at stake.¹ The question of how to determine on whose side the majority of the people were acquired great political and practical significance. The Bolsheviks, actively involved in various election campaigns, understood that the results of the voting did not fully reflect the people's will in a situation when the dominant classes had the economic and political means to influence the voters. When, in the autumn of 1917, Kamenev and Zinoviev said "We have no majority among the people, and without this condition the uprising is hopeless", Lenin ironically commented that they would like to have a guarantee in advance that the Bolsheviks would get "exactly one-half of the votes plus one" throughout the country. But who could give such a guarantee? "History has never given such a guarantee, and is quite unable to give it in any revolution."² Drawing on the experience of various countries, he considered that what was needed for victory was not an arithmetic, but a *revolutionary majority*. The outcome of a revolution was not decided by the ballot box but by most energetic and vigorous actions of the opposed classes and their allies. A revolutionary majority was a majority of the politically active masses involved in the struggle.³

Lenin's conclusion in the autumn of 1917 that the Party already had such a majority, was based on the sum total of very important facts. The elections in August and September to the city and district

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Crisis Has Matured", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 82.

² V.I. Lenin, "Letter to Comrades", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 196.

³ V.I. Lenin, "The Bolsheviks Must Assume Power", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 19.

dumas in Petrograd and Moscow showed a continuing rise in the popularity of the Bolsheviks. Having obtained 11.6 per cent of the vote in the June elections to the Moscow City Duma, the Bolsheviks in September got 51.5 per cent of the vote in the district duma elections. Most of the peasant Soviets, previously almost wholly in the hands of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, now, in spite of their leaders, came out against collaboration with the bourgeoisie. A stream of reports from the fronts indicated that the soldiers were more and more decidedly passing to the side of the Bolsheviks. The peasant insurrections against the Provisional Government across the country were direct support of the Bolshevik Party's policy. And, moreover, the soldiers were refusing to fire on the peasants.¹ Subsequently Lenin wrote that in October 1917 the Bolsheviks relied on (1) the overwhelming majority of the proletariat, (2) almost half of the army, and (3) an overwhelming preponderance of forces at the decisive moment at the decisive spots, namely in the 2 capitals (Petrograd and Moscow) and in the fronts near the centre.²

Only when convinced of that did Lenin deem it possible to pose the issue of insurrection in practical terms. In a letter to the Central Committee and the Petrograd and Moscow Committees of the Party of 12-14 (25-27) September he said: "The Bolsheviks, having obtained a majority in the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of both capitals, can and *must* take state power into their own hands.... We are concerned now not with the 'day', or 'moment' of insurrection in the narrow sense of the word. That will be only decided by the common voice of those who are *in contact* with the workers and soldiers, with *the masses*.... The point is to make the *task* clear to the Party. The present task must be an *armed uprising* in Petrograd and Moscow.... It would be naive to wait for a 'formal' majority for the Bolsheviks; no revolution ever waits for *that*."³

In preparing the decisive attack on the positions of the bourgeoisie, the Bolshevik Party warned the masses against premature, unorganised actions, called for restraint and discipline, exposed the calls of the anarchists and restrained the impatient. In his article *Marxism and Insurrection* Lenin explained that insurrection had to be regarded as an art. To be successful, "insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class, ... upon a *revolutionary upsurge of the people*". It was necessary to determine the time for an insurrection correctly, choosing the *critical moment* for it when the advanced ranks of the people had achieved maximum activity and there was particularly strong wavering in

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Letter to Comrades", *op. cit.*, pp. 196-97.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, Moscow, 1977, pp. 262.

³ V.I. Lenin, "The Bolsheviks Must Assume Power", *op. cit.*, pp. 19-21.

the ranks of the enemies and the ambivalent friends of the revolution. Evaluating the situation Lenin concluded that there were all objective preconditions for a successful insurrection.¹

On October 1 (14), in a "Letter to the Central Committee, the Moscow and Petrograd Committees, and the Bolshevik Members of the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets" he wrote that the Bolsheviks "must take power at once". Proposing the slogans "Power to the Soviets, Land to the Peasants, Peace to the Nations, Bread to the Starving", he emphasised: "Victory is certain, and the chances are ten to one that it will be a bloodless victory. To wait would be a crime to the revolution."²

In those days, in an article *Advice of an Onlooker* Lenin stressed: "Never play with insurrection, but when beginning it realise firmly that you must go all the way. Concentrate a great superiority of forces at the decisive point and at the decisive moment, otherwise the enemy, who has the advantage of better preparation and organisation, will destroy the insurgents. Once the insurrection has begun, you must act with the greatest determination, and by all means, without fail, take the offensive. 'The defensive is the death of every armed rising.' You must try to take the enemy by surprise and seize the moment while his forces are scattered. You must strive for daily successes, however small, and at all costs retain 'moral superiority'."³

On 10 (23) October, at an underground meeting, after a report by Lenin who had secretly returned to Petrograd from Finland, the Central Committee decided by ten votes to two (Kamenev and Zinoviev) to prepare for insurrection. Its premise was that the international position of the Russian Revolution demanded this. The anti-war insurrection in the German fleet was "a manifestation of a growing world socialist revolution throughout Europe", while at the same time there was a danger of a deal between the imperialists in order to strangle the revolution in Russia. The home situation was characterised on the one hand by a danger of the bourgeoisie and Kerensky surrendering Petrograd to the Germans and preparation of a "second Kornilov revolt", and on the other by the Bolsheviks winning a majority in the Soviets, the peasant insurrection, and the public mood turning in favour of the Bolshevik Party. "Recognising, therefore, that an armed insurrection is inevitable and has fully matured, the Central Committee proposes that all organisations of the Party be guided by this, and discuss and decide all practical questions from that standpoint."⁴

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Marxism and Insurrection", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 22-25.

² V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 140-41.

³ V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 180.

⁴ *Minutes of the Central Committee of the RSDLP(B). August 1917 to February 1918*, Moscow, 1958, p. 86 (in Russian).

Preparations for the insurrection entered the decisive phase. A special body was set up under the Petrograd Soviet for its practical leadership—the Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC). Its nucleus became the Military Revolutionary Centre of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party set up on October 16 and consisting of A. S. Bubnov, F. E. Dzerzhinsky, Ya. M. Sverdlov, J. V. Stalin, and M. S. Uritsky. The same day the Central Committee, with representatives of party and trade union organisations taking part, reviewed the question of readiness for an armed uprising.

Kamenev and Zinoviev, members of the Central Committee, opposed insurrection, pinning all their hopes on a Constituent Assembly. Trotsky, at that time chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, proposed waiting for the opening of the 2nd All-Russia Congress of Soviets scheduled for October 25 (November 7), so that it could decide the issue of power. But without a victorious armed insurrection the Congress would not have the power to overthrow the Provisional Government. Meanwhile, postponement of the uprising would give the government a chance to rally forces to suppress it. The insurrection, Lenin considered, must necessarily begin before the Congress started its work. "There is not the slightest doubt," he wrote, "that the Bolsheviks, if they let themselves be caught in the trap of constitutional illusions, 'faith' in the Congress of Soviets and in the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, 'waiting' for the Congress of Soviets, and so forth—these Bolsheviks would most certainly be *miserable traitors* to the proletarian cause."¹

The Central Committee of the RSDLP(B), rejecting all essentially defeatist proposals, decided that the Party must energetically rally forces for the impending battles. On the night of October 20, in the apartment of a worker, D. A. Pavlov, Lenin discussed the preparations for the insurrection with the leaders of the Central Committee's Military Organisation N. I. Podvoisky, V. A. Antonov-Ovseyenko, and V. I. Nevsky. He insisted on speeding them up and increasing the combat capacity of the Red Guard.

The Red Guard was the core of the armed forces of the revolution. In Petrograd and its suburbs it numbered around 23,000 men at the moment of the insurrection, and consisted almost wholly (95.9 per cent) of workers, primarily metal workers.² Its arms were made and repaired by the workers in the war factories. The Red Guards were trained and drilled in the works and factories by revolutionary soldiers.

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Crisis Has Matured", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 81.

² V.I. Startsev, *Essays on the History of the Petrograd Red Guard and Workers' Militia (March 1917-April 1918)*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1965, p. 255 (in Russian).

The soldiers of the Petrograd garrison and the armies of the Northern and Western fronts, nearest to the capital, and the sailors of the Baltic Fleet, were a reliable support of the Bolsheviks. The Military Revolutionary Committee, planned concerted action of three main forces in the insurrection—the Red Guard, army units and the navy, more than 300,000 fighters all in all. The forces of the revolution were ready for the decisive battle for power in the capital. They had the support of the millions of the working people throughout the country. Everywhere Bolshevik conferences were held, and Red Guard units were being formed. The army of the socialist revolution was poised for the attack.

Chapter 2

VICTORY OF THE REVOLUTION

THE PROLETARIAT TAKES POWER

On October 24 (November 6), 1917, Red Guard units began occupying the strategic points in the capital—bridges and the post and telegraph offices, and gathered at the Smolny, where the headquarters of the revolution, the Central and Petersburg Committees of the Bolsheviks, the Petrograd Soviet and the Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC) were located. Hot on the heels of the Red Guard came sailors and military units. The MRC put three of its members, V. A. Antonov-Ovseyenko, N. I. Podvoisky and G. I. Chudnovsky, in charge of combat operations. Late in the evening Lenin, leaving his hide-out, came to the Smolny and immediately assumed the guidance of the armed struggle. K. A. Mekhonoshin, an MRC member, later wrote: "Reports from everywhere came to him, he always managed to give very valuable, precise instructions, to spot danger in good time at one point or another. Comrade Lenin was the real commander-in-chief of all the armed forces of the October Revolution."¹

By the morning of October 25 (November 7) workers and revolutionary troops had occupied almost the whole of the city. The insurrection was completed the following night; the Winter Palace, the seat of the Provisional Government, was stormed after an ultimatum to surrender had been rejected. The vast superiority of forces on the Bolsheviks' side, and the resolute leadership of the uprising ensured a rapid and almost bloodless victory: while more than 1,300 had been killed and wounded in the days of the February Revolution, in October, 6 persons were killed in the capital and 50 wounded.²

On the historic day of October 25 (November 7), 1917 the MRC published an appeal to the citizens of Russia, written by Lenin,

¹ *Lenin, Leader of October. Reminiscences of Petrograd Workers*, Leningrad, 1956, p. 191 (in Russian).

² *History of the CPSU*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1966, p. 700; Vol. 3, Book 1, Moscow, 1967, p. 328 (in Russian).

which said: "The Provisional Government has been deposed. State power has passed into the hands of the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies—the Revolutionary Military Committee, which heads the Petrograd proletariat and garrison."¹ The MRC called for the authority of the Soviets to be established everywhere.

At 10.40 p.m. the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies opened in the white marble hall of the Smolny Institute. Representatives of 402 Soviets—city, provincial, county and district—had arrived from all over the country, including the non-Russian ethnic parts—the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bessarabia, the Caucasus, Turkestan and Central Asia. Most of the Soviets represented were joint: 195 Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and 119 Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. The call of the Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet to the representatives of Soldiers' Soviets just before the insurrection was typical: "You are not going there to bandy words, but to conclude the great cause of emancipating labour, and this Congress must take power into its own hands, and you must give it support with all the means available to you." An analysis of the 670 questionnaires filled in by the delegates showed that 505 were firmly committed to transfer of all power to the Soviets.²

In spite of obstruction by a group of Mensheviks and Right-wing Socialist-Revolutionaries who demonstratively walked out of the Congress, two night sessions were enough to take historic decisions. At the first an appeal to workers, soldiers and peasants, drafted by Lenin and read out by A. V. Lunacharsky, was adopted. It said that the Congress was taking over power and resolved "that all local authority be transferred to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, which must ensure genuine revolutionary order".³

Lenin came to the second session of the Congress. Here is how the American journalist John Reed present there described the scene: "It was just 8.40 when a thundering wave of cheers announced the entrance of the presidium, with Lenin—great Lenin—among them. A short, stocky figure, with a big head set down in his shoulders, bald and bulging. Little eyes, a snubbish nose, wide, generous mouth, and heavy chin; clean shaven now, but already beginning to bristle with the well-known beard of his past and future. Dressed in shabby clothes, his trousers much too long for him. Unimpressive, to be the idol of the mob, loved and revered as perhaps few leaders in history

¹ V.I. Lenin, "To the Citizens of Russia!", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, 1964, p. 236.

² *The 2nd All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. A Collection of Documents*, Moscow, 1957, pp. 15, 210 (in Russian).

³ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1957, p. 8 (in Russian).

have been. A strange popular leader—a leader purely by virtue of intellect, colourless, humourless, uncompromising and detached, without picturesque idiosyncrasies—but with the power of explaining profound ideas in simple terms, of analysing a concrete situation.

“And combined with shrewdness, the greatest intellectual audacity.”¹

Following Lenin’s report the Congress unanimously passed a Decree on Peace. It was supported in speeches by F. E. Dzerzhinsky (the Social-Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania), P. I. Stučka (the Social-Democracy of Latvia), and V. S. Mickevičius-Kapsukas (the Lithuanian Social-Democrats). A Decree on Land drafted by Lenin was passed with one vote against and eight abstentions. A decree on the organisation of power established that the supreme body of authority was the All-Russia Congress of Soviets, and between congresses the All-Russia Central Executive Committee (ARCEC) of Soviets. Russia was proclaimed the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). To govern the country a Workers’ and Peasants’ Government, the Council of People’s Commissars (CPC), was created. Resolutions on ensuring revolutionary order in localities and abolishing the death penalty at the front revived by Krensky were also passed.

Thus, for the first time in history, a state arose in which the proletariat had become the ruling class. And its first act was to adopt a programme corresponding to the deepest aspirations of the working people: peace, land, and power of the Soviets.

The counter-revolution made a frantic attempt to recover power. Kerensky, who had fled to the HQ of the Northern Front, moved on Petrograd at the head of several of General P. N. Krasnov’s Cossack squadrons. While a mutiny of officer cadets began in the capital, Cossacks occupied Gatchina and Tsarskoye Selo, and reached the Pulkovo Hills. This was a precarious situation. A state of emergency was declared in Petrograd. Tens of thousands of workers, soldiers, and sailors of the Baltic Fleet defended the city at the call of the new government. The mutinies were quickly suppressed.

The victory of the revolution in Petrograd had to be consolidated in Moscow, the second biggest economic, political, and administrative centre of Russia, and in fact its second capital. But events developed there with more difficulty than in Petrograd.

On the morning of October 25 (November 7), when news of victory of the revolution arrived from Petrograd, the Moscow Bolshevik Committee set up a party combat centre incorporating M. F. Vlad-

¹ John Reed, *Ten Days that Shook the World*, The Modern Library, New York, 1935, p. 125.

mirsky, V. N. Podbelsky, I. A. Pyatnitsky, and Emelyan Yaroslavsky. By the evening the Moscow Soviet had formed a Military Revolutionary Committee which included several Mensheviks as well as Bolsheviks. The forces of the revolution relied on the Red Guard and a majority of the garrison. The revolutionary soldiers set up guard of the Post Office and the Central Telegraph Office, the issue of bourgeois newspapers was suspended. But officer cadets seized the Manege and the building of the City Duma. The Committee of Public Safety, headed by the Mayor, the Right Socialist-Revolutionary V. V. Rudnev, began negotiations with the MRC on the withdrawal of troops, striving to gain time and placing its hopes on the arrival of troops summoned from the Western and South-Western Fronts. The counter-revolutionaries succeeded in occupying the Kremlin. They machine-gunned revolutionary soldiers captured there and gained control of the city centre. The revolutionary forces, relying on district Military Revolutionary Committees, consolidated in the working-class districts on the outskirts. Only after the MRC's call for a general political strike was there a turn in the course of the struggle.

On October 28 (November 10) the workers of Moscow factories concertedly stopped work and began to arm and join the Red Guard. Its strength rapidly grew to 30,000. The revolutionary units, passing to the offensive, soon blocked off the centre. The Red Guards of Moscow factories, soldiers of reserve regiments and cyclists were involved in heavy fighting. Red Guard units came to their aid from Orekhovo-Zuyevo, Klin, Vladimir, Tula, Ivanovo-Voznesensk and other towns. A detachment of sailors, soldiers, and Red Guards moved on Moscow from Petrograd. At dawn on November 3 (16) revolutionary units broke the enemy resistance and entered the Kremlin. The Soviets won. During the fighting around 1,000 people were killed. Nearly 400 of them were buried in a common grave at the Kremlin wall.¹ The counter-revolutionaries' plans to make Moscow a bastion of struggle against the Soviets were dashed.

THE TRIUMPHAL MARCH OF SOVIET POWER

Victory of the revolution in Petrograd and Moscow, the formation of a Government of Soviets and the decrees on peace and land raised all working people of the country to fight for liberation. The Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia, passed on November 2 (15), proclaimed the equality and sovereignty of nations and their right to free self-determination, secession and formation of independent

¹ G.S. Ignatiev, *October 1917 in Moscow*, Moscow, 1964, p. 133 (in Russian).

states. It abolished all and every national and national-religious privilege and restriction, and proclaimed free development for all national minorities and ethnic groups. The policy of national oppression rejected, the new authorities embarked on a policy of full emancipation and voluntary union of the nations of Russia. Two months later the Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People proclaimed the main principles and tasks of the socialist state, stressing that all power should belong wholly and exclusively to the working masses and their plenipotentiary representatives, the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.¹

These decrees and declaration were convincing the working people in practice that the Soviets were their own power. As Lenin recalled later: "From the very outset we gave the ordinary workers and peasants an idea of our policy in the form of decrees. The result was the enormous confidence we enjoyed and now enjoy among the masses of the people."² This, as well as the Bolsheviks' immense organisational and educational work, and the heroic endeavour of Russia's proletariat, was a factor that ensured victory for the Soviets throughout the country within three to four months. Considering the vast expanse of Russia, and the diversity of the socio-political situation, that was an exceptionally short period. That is why Lenin wrote and spoke of the "triumphal march" of Soviet power.

The concrete forms of the transfer of power to the Soviets locally, peaceful or armed, and the time when their authority was established depended on the balance of class forces, and sometimes on specific local and ethnic factors. In some areas it happened immediately and easily, in others after a stubborn, sanguinary struggle. The industrial centres, the concentrations of the main forces of the working class, were bastions of the revolution from the outset. Of the 97 largest towns of Russia, power of the Soviets was established in a peaceful way in 80.³

In the Central Industrial Region, accounting for almost half the industrial proletariat of the country, the Soviets took power either simultaneously with Petrograd and Moscow or soon after them. In Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Shuya, Kostroma, Tver, Bryansk, Yaroslavl, Vladimir, Ryazan, Serpukhov, and other towns, the local Soviets, led by Bolsheviks, had actually exercised power even before the October armed insurrection. In Ivanovo-Voznesensk, for instance, already in the evening of October 25 (November 7), as soon as news of the events in the capital became known, the Soviet of Workers'

¹ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. I, pp. 39-41, 341.

² V.I. Lenin, "Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, 1976, p. 303.

³ I.I. Mints, *History of the Great October Revolution*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, pp.704-705 (in Russian).

and Soldiers' Deputies, led by the Bolshevik F. N. Samoilov, moved to take power. A provisional revolutionary headquarters was appointed, under the chairmanship of D. A. Furmanov. With the help of the Red Guard, it ensured revolutionary order. In Orel and Kursk the Soviets took power peacefully, too.

Events developed in a more complicated way in towns where leadership of the Soviets remained in the hands of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. In Voronezh the provincial Soviet refused to recognise the Government of Soviets. The provincial Bolshevik committee formed a revolutionary committee of three Bolsheviks and two Left Socialist-Revolutionaries on October 26 (November 8), which decided to take power. The collaborationist Soviet jointly with the officers of the garrison and the bourgeois City Duma organised a Committee of Public Salvation. After a day's fight the soldiers and the Red Guards put the Revolutionary Committee in power. Shortly afterwards, new elections for the Soviet were held. In Smolensk, too, the issue of power was settled in armed struggle. In Tula the Bolshevik Revolutionary Committee negotiated with the Committee of Popular Struggle, while at the same time arming revolutionary squads. By December 7 (20) the Bolsheviks predominated in the Soviet and it assumed power.

In the Volga Area the proletarian centres—Kazan, Samara, Saratov and Tsaritsyn were Bolshevik strongholds, and power of the Soviets was established there at the end of October. In December, the Soviets won in Simbirsk and Penza. In the working-class Urals, where more than two-thirds of the Soviets followed the Bolsheviks, they took power, as a rule, without armed struggle. In Perm and Vyatka the Bolsheviks had first to win a majority in the Soviets. In Astrakhan the officer and Cossack squads were only defeated at the end of January 1918 after protracted fighting. In the Orenburg province a counter-revolutionary centre arose, headed by *ataman* (Cossack commander) A. I. Dutov who raised a mutiny that was only suppressed in the spring of 1918.

The army, several million-strong, was an immense political and armed force. The Northern and Western Fronts, nearest to the capitals, and the Baltic Fleet actively supported the armed insurrection in Petrograd. The 40,000 men of the Lettish Riflemen immediately took the side of the Soviet Government, but the HQ of the Supreme Command under General N. N. Dukhonin (after Kerensky's flight he had proclaimed himself Supreme Commander), located in Moghilev, became a centre of counter-revolution on a countrywide scale. It did not manage to move frontline troops on Moscow, but it tried to retain leadership of them, formed "shock units" against the revolution, and sabotaged any efforts to propose an armistice on the fronts, initiated by the Council of People's Commissars. Dukhonin was dis-

placed on the night of November 8 (21), and a Bolshevik, Regimental Sergeant-Major N. V. Krylenko, was appointed Supreme Commander. Ten days later, the GHQ was taken without a fight, with the support of the revolutionary soldiers. Dukhonin, who a day before ordered the release from arrest in Bykhovo of the leaders of the August mutiny L. G. Kornilov, A. I. Denikin and others, was killed by infuriated sailors. GHQ was put at the service of Soviet power.

In Estonia, and the parts of Latvia and Byelorussia not occupied by the Germans, the conditions were favourable for the proletarian revolution. Many Soviets were already in the hands of the Bolsheviks in early October, and the nationalist parties were almost completely isolated. The Military Revolutionary Committee of the Estonian area, led by J. J. Anvelt, V. E. Kingisepp, and I. V. Rabchinsky, proclaimed workers' power in the middle of November, and repelled bourgeoisie's attempts to overthrow it. A constitution of the Estland Workers' Commune was drafted, and workers' control was introduced in enterprises. In Latvia the establishment of Soviet power was confirmed by the 2nd Congress of Workers', Soldiers', and Landless Peasants' Deputies, convened in December in Valmiera. The Executive Committee of the Soviets (Iskolat) headed by F. A. Rozin-Azis set about nationalising the land, industry and commerce.¹ The revolution won quickly and bloodlessly in Byelorussia.

A different situation built up in the areas where the South-Western, Romanian and Caucasus Fronts were operating, in the Ukraine and Moldavia, on the Don, in the North Caucasus, and in Transcaucasia. Proletarian Donbass became a stronghold of the socialist revolution. In Lugansk power was transferred to the Soviets without complications.² But in Kiev the Soviet was under the influence of Russian and Ukrainian Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. Only on November 1, after a strike of the workers of the Arsenal and other factories, and after three days' stubborn fighting led by the Revolutionary Committee was the resistance of the Provisional Government's troops broken. But the fruits of the victory were exploited by the bourgeois-nationalist Central Rada (Council) which seized power on November 7 (20) and proclaimed a Ukrainian People's Republic. It developed a struggle against the Soviets, and began to prepare for war against Soviet Russia in alliance with the Russian and foreign capitalist classes.

¹ *The Struggle for Soviet Power in the Baltic Area*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 130-31, 139-41, 149-54, 319-25 (in Russian).

² K.E. Voroshilov, "From the Recent, Infinitely Remote Past", *October 1917. A Collection of Articles and Reminiscences*, Rostov-on-Don, 1921, p. 62 (in Russian).

The Congress of Soviets of the Ukraine convened at the beginning of December in Kiev was dispersed by the Rada. The more than 120 delegates then moved to Kharkov, where the 1st All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets was held on December 11 and 12 (24 and 25). It declared the creation of a Ukrainian Soviet Republic as a federated part of Soviet Russia, and extended operation of the decrees of Soviet power to the Ukraine. The first Soviet Government of the Ukraine, the People's Secretariat, was headed by a prominent Bolshevik, F. A. Sergeyev (Artem), and included V. P. Zatonsky, N. A. Skrypnyk and others. The Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR welcomed the Soviet statehood of the Ukrainians and promised "the new government of the fraternal republic full support of every kind in the struggle for peace and in the transfer of all land, factories and banks to the working people of the Ukraine".¹

In January 1918 the Kiev Soviet, together with the works committees and trade unions, called the workers to a new armed insurrection. Only after many days' stubborn street fighting against nationalist troops and Cossacks did the Soviet troops and the workers' squads restore Soviet power in Kiev on January 26 (February 8). The Central Rada fled and by the end of February worker and peasant power had been established throughout the Ukraine.

In Moldavia, where there was almost no factory proletariat, Soviet power was established at the end of 1917 and early 1918 as a result of the revolutionary forces' fight against bourgeois nationalists. But in January Bessarabia (western part of Moldavia) was invaded and occupied by Romanian troops.

On the Don, where the Cossacks constituting less than half of the population owned 85 per cent of the land and enjoyed other privileges, a Don Military Government headed by Ataman A. M. Kaledin had already been formed in May 1917. Immediately after the October Revolution Kaledin raised an anti-Soviet mutiny, and the Don soon became a national counter-revolutionary centre. All the enemies of Soviet power began to gather there: Generals M. V. Alexeyev, L. G. Kornilov and A. I. Denikin who formed a triumvirate, the Octobrist M. V. Rodzyanko, the Cadets P. N. Milyukov and P. B. Struve, and the Socialist-Revolutionary B. V. Savinkov. A whiteguard Volunteer Army was being formed in Novocherkassk. Only after stubborn armed struggle did the revolutionary troops advancing from the Donbass and supported by uprisings of workers and the poorer Cossacks defeat the Don counter-revolution and liberate Novocherkassk and Rostov. Kaledin shot himself, Kornilov was killed and the Volunteer Army retreated to the Kuban. In March 1918 a Don Soviet Republic was established.

¹ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. I, pp. 245-46.

In the Caucasus the revolution developed in a complicated situation of mixed social relations and a multinational population. In Baku (Azerbaijan), a major proletarian centre, Bolsheviks, against the resistance of Mensheviks, Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and bourgeois nationalists, achieved a proclamation of Soviet power at a session of the Baku Soviet. On November 2 (15) a new executive committee of the Soviet was elected, headed by S. G. Shahumyan. However, both in Baku and even more so in other parts of the Caucasus, the Mensheviks (especially in Georgia), Socialist-Revolutionaries, and bourgeois nationalist organisations (Armenian Dashnaks, Azerbaijani Musavatists) continued fierce resistance. In Tiflis (Georgia) they succeeded in disbanding the Assembly of the Garrison Delegates which supported the Bolsheviks, seized the arsenal, and set up their own government, the Transcaucasian Commissariat. Except in Baku, power in Transcaucasia proved to be in the hands of bourgeois nationalist organisations which received support from the imperialists of Great Britain and the USA. In the North Caucasus, after a tense struggle, a Terek People's Republic was proclaimed in Pyatigorsk in the spring of 1918.

In Turkestan, one of the most backward periphery areas of Russia, the role of the Russian proletarian part of the population proved particularly decisive. The main stronghold of the revolutionary struggle was Tashkent, a working-class centre in the midst of the masses of the peasant population who were under the influence of reactionary *bais* (rich landowners) and the Muslim clergy. In response to an attempt by the bourgeois authorities to disarm the soldiers of the garrison, an armed insurrection broke out in Tashkent on 28 October (November 10). After four days' fighting power passed to the Soviet. In November a Turkestan Council of People's Commissars was formed, headed by the Bolshevik F. I. Kolesov. Soviet power was established comparatively quickly in 2 major cities, Samarkand and Ashkhabad. However, in the Kokand, Jetysu (Seven Rivers) and other areas the establishment of Soviet power met with stubborn resistance and dragged on.

In the proletarian centre of Siberia, Krasnoyarsk, Soviet power was proclaimed on 29 October (November 11) 1917. During November it was established in Irkutsk, Omsk and other cities, and in March 1918 reached Kamchatka.

The swift advance of Soviet power from the shores of the Baltic to the Pacific Ocean showed that the October Revolution had deep roots among the popular masses, evoking a lively response in the hearts of millions. Above all, the success of the revolution manifested the *maturity of the Russian proletariat*, which marched in the vanguard of the movement, and was followed by the peasant mass in soldiers' greatcoats and sailors' pea-jackets. The working class of Russia was

able to take over leadership of the revolutionary struggle and become the driving force of the political and social transformation of the country. The agencies of revolutionary power that it created, the Soviets, consolidated the positions won.

In carrying out a socialist revolution the working class relied on an alliance with the poorest peasantry. At the same time the Bolsheviks put forward an agrarian programme that made it possible to draw the broadest sections of the country working people into the revolution. Having rallied *a majority of the peasants* around the proletariat, they not only won them away from the bourgeoisie but also drew them to a considerable extent from out of the influence of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. The policy of the Bolshevik Party in ethnic relations ensured Soviet power *support of the oppressed nations of Russia*, to whom it brought both national liberation and emancipation from exploitation.

The fact that an experienced, militant and genuinely revolutionary party, the Bolsheviks, stood at the helm of the movement was decisive for victory of the Russian Revolution. It was able to prepare the working class for victorious revolutionary battles. Drawing on the Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution, it developed a strategy and tactics of struggle for socialism. The Party put forward slogans that made it clear for all working men and women that the socialist revolution and worker power would bring them immediate and tangible economic and socio-political fruits, and save them from oppression and exploitation. The Party succeeded in uniting various revolutionary movements and all forms of popular dissatisfaction into a single stream. And in very complicated circumstances it provided bold leadership of the struggle and led the masses to victory.

The relative weakness of the Russian bourgeoisie, its cowardice and political inexperience, on the one hand, and the split in the world capitalist class, absorbed in the unending war, on the other, made in no small way for success of the Revolution. In spite of the panic calls of the Russian bourgeoisie for help, neither the Anglo-French nor the German bloc could give it immediate military support.

An essential factor in victory of the Socialist Revolution was the help of the international proletariat. Many workers from foreign countries who were in Russia at the time were directly involved in the revolutionary struggle. There were then between 2,100,000 and 2,300,000 prisoners-of-war from the Central Powers in Russia (in the central provinces and Siberia), and more than 1.5 million of them were employed on various jobs in agriculture, building and manufacturing industry (especially in the Donbass and the Urals), working side by side with the local population. They included around 500,000 Hungarians, between 400,000 and 450,000 Austrians, 200,000 to 300,000 Southern Slavs, 200,000 to 250,000 Czechs and

Slovaks, 190,000 Germans, between 120,000 and 150,000 Romanians, around 100,000 Poles, 50,000 Turks, and also Italians and other nationalities.¹ In addition there were 2,800,000 refugees from Poland and the Baltics in the central provinces, and hundreds of thousands of seasonal workers from Finland, Iran, Korea, China, and other countries. This diverse mass, multilingual and motley in social composition and political mood, was involved in the revolutionary battles to one degree or another.

The Polish and Finnish internationalists took an active part in the preparations for and carrying through of the October uprising in Petrograd. Felix Dzerzhinsky and Josef Unschlicht were members of the Petrograd MRC, Julian Leshchinsky and Stanislaw Pestkowski were active in the factories, and the brothers Yukka and Eino Rahja carried out direct assignments for Lenin. The Petrograd Red Guard included Poles, Bulgarians, Czechs, Germans, Chinese, Serbs and Hungarians. The American journalists John Reed, Albert Rhys Williams and Louise Bryant sympathising with the Bolshevik cause were in the thick of events. On November 5 (18), 1917, Lenin and Sverdlov received a delegation of 300 Belgian workers from factories in Petrograd and Sestroretsk, who came with the message for the working class of Russia that "Belgian workers are wholeheartedly with them in the fight for peace and socialism".² In December POWs, Germans, Hungarians, Austrians, Czechs and Poles, took part in a mass demonstration with slogans of peace and friendship among nations.

In the armed fighting in Moscow Poles, Hungarians, Austrians, Southern Slavs, Germans and Frenchmen took part on the side of the Revolution. Great number of POWs took part in the establishing of Soviet power in the Ukraine: Czechs, Slovaks, Poles and Southern Slavs in Kiev, Hungarians, Germans, Austrians, Romanians, Czechs, Slovaks and Bulgarians in Odessa, Poles and Southern Slavs in Ekaterinoslav. In the Urals and Siberia the internationalists included Hungarian, Austrian and German POWs, Polish refugees and Chinese and Korean seasonal workers. In Omsk, in October 1917, Josip Broz Tito, banished from Petrograd by the Provisional Government, joined the Red Guard and carried on revolutionary work among the peasants alongside Bolsheviks. In December, former Hungarian POWs led by Károly Ligeti telegraphed to Lenin from Omsk: "We have become allies of the Russian Revolution and are marching together with you."³

¹ *The Internationalists. Foreign Working People—Participants in the Fight for Power of Soviets*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 15, 30-33, 51 (in Russian).

² *Pravda*, November 20 (December 3), 1917.

³ *The Internationalists...*, p. 122.

In Petrograd, Moscow, Orekhovo-Zuyevo, Tula, Tver, Penza, Samara, Kazan, Simbirsk, Chelyabinsk, Omsk and many other cities, unions of ex-POWs and committees of foreign internationalists began to be formed. They assembled in regional conferences, and in April 1918 held an All-Russia Congress of POW Social-Democrat Internationalists representing at least 100,000 members of the movement. Speakers at the meeting were the Hungarian Béla Kun, the Pole Mieczystaw Warszawski, and the Czech F. Beneš. The Congress founded an International Revolutionary Socialist Organisation of Foreign Workers and Farmers which was to work hand in hand with the RCP(B). The manifesto issued by the Congress said: "We have all unanimously decided to support the Russian revolutionary government arms in hand and to put the Communism of Marx and Engels into practice."¹

The first months after the October Revolution, Lenin said in March 1918, were "a continuous triumphal march" of Soviet power because "the overwhelming majority of the population proved to be on our side, and that is why victory was achieved with such extraordinary ease". However, he continued, it should not be forgotten that after that victory the Party and the country were faced with new tasks of prodigious difficulty: tasks of internal organisation that arise for any social revolution, and international tasks, viz., defence against imperialism and the development of ties between the Russian Revolution and the mounting international revolution.²

BUILDING THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' STATE

The victory of the October Revolution radically altered the position of the working class. From an oppressed it became the ruling class, and its vanguard, the Communist Party, became a ruling party and a force guiding the building of a new society.

The priority task facing the working class and Bolsheviks was to build a Soviet state, a state of a new type. The most important theoretical issues of the class essence, goals and functions of that state had been developed by Lenin on the eve of the Revolution. His main conclusion had been that the new state should be an instrument of the socialist transformation of all social relations: "The proletariat needs state power, a centralised organisation of force, an organisation of violence, both to crush the resistance of the exploiters and to lead the enormous mass of the population—the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, and semi-proletarians—in the work of organising a so-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

² V.I. Lenin, "Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 88-92.

cialist economy." The workers' party must become "the teacher, the guide, the leader of all the working and exploited people in organising their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie".¹

The working class began building its state against fierce resistance by the overthrown classes. The counter-revolution not only hatched conspiracies and raised mutinies, but also organised sabotage by civil servants and officialdom so as to paralyse business and disrupt deliveries of food to the industrial centres; and Soviet workers and officials were being murdered. The difficulties were made worse by the fact that the working class had no experience of public organisation and administration. It had to advance by roads not yet charted by anyone.

An important issue requiring an immediate response was whether the Bolsheviks would take power alone or share it with other parties. At the 2nd All-Russia Congress of Soviets the Bolsheviks had an absolute majority, 390 of the 649 delegates.² When some of the Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries quit the Congress as a protest against the armed insurrection and "seizure of power", the ratio was altered even further in favour of the Bolsheviks. Meanwhile a regrouping took place in the camp of the petty-bourgeois parties: the groups of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionaries and Internationalist Mensheviks were strengthened at the expense of the right wing.

The All-Russia Central Executive Committee elected by the Congress (the second ARCEC) was formed on a multiparty basis and included 62 Bolsheviks, 30 Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, 6 Internationalist Social-Democrats, 3 Ukrainian Socialists and one Maximalist, a total of 102. The Bolshevik Yakov Sverdlov, an experienced political leader and outstanding organiser, was elected chairman on 8 (21) November, 1917. The ARCEC expanded all the time. After its merging with the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies and incorporating representatives of the frontline soldiers, the Navy, and the trade unions, the ARCEC grew in January 1918 to 378 persons. But the Bolsheviks retained the leading position in it.³

The Soviets themselves and the Executive Committee were also open to representatives of the parties that had walked out of the 2nd Congress, on condition that they recognised Soviet power. Although these parties took the road of open struggle against the Soviets, they

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 409.

² *Pravda*, October 29 (November 11), 1917.

³ A.I. Razgon, *The ARCEC of the Soviets in the First Months of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, Moscow, 1977, pp. 26-44 (in Russian).

nevertheless operated legally for a long time, took part in elections, and had representatives on the local Soviets, and at provincial and All-Russia congresses. In the provincial congresses of Soviets in the first half of 1918 Communists and their sympathisers had 52.4 per cent of the seats, Left Socialist-Revolutionaries 16.8 per cent, Right Socialist-Revolutionaries 2.9 per cent, Mensheviks 1.1 per cent, Anarchists 0.5 per cent, other parties 3.2 and non-party 23.1 per cent.¹

Lenin considered agreement of the proletarian party with the petty bourgeoisie, which constituted the majority of Russia's population, to be not only possible but also necessary. However, that was to be "agreement with the petty bourgeoisie not in the sense of a bloc for a bourgeois-democratic revolution", which, historically, would be a return to a phase already passed, "not in the sense of restricting the tasks of the socialist revolution, but exclusively in the sense of the forms of transition to socialism on the part of *different* sections of the petty bourgeoisie".²

Unlike the ARCEC, the Soviet government, the Council of People's Commissars (CPC), was initially one-party. Lenin became its chairman, and prominent Bolsheviks, experienced organisers, were appointed to the posts of People's Commissars and Deputy Commissars, and members of boards. Lenin said subsequently that "being the ruling party, we had inevitably to merge the Party and government leadership".³ A well-known literary critic, A.V. Lunacharsky, became People's Commissar of Public Education. Bolsheviks with military experience—V. A. Antonov-Ovseyenko, P. E. Dybenko, N. V. Krylenko—became People's Commissars for the Army and Navy; L. D. Trotsky became People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, but from January 1918 G. V. Chicherin was already in charge of most of the Commissariat's work. P. I. Stucka was appointed People's Commissar of Justice, A. G. Shlyapnikov of Labour, M. T. Elizarov of Railways, A. M. Kollontai of Public Care, J. V. Stalin of Nationalities' Affairs. Somewhat later, G. I. Petrovsky was put in charge of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, and A. G. Shlichter of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture.

Among the Bolshevik leaders there were those who advocated sharing power with petty-bourgeois parties, i.e., forming a "uniform socialist" government involving parties from the Bolsheviks to the People's Socialists. After bitter discussions, and the resignation of

¹ M.F. Vladimirovsky, *Soviets, Executive Committees and Congresses of Soviets*, 2nd issue, Moscow, 1921, p. 6 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "Theses on the Tasks of the Party and the Present Situation", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, 1969, p. 43.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, 1975, p. 177.

several People's Commissars, the Central Committee of the Party firmly took Lenin's stand; representatives of the petty-bourgeois parties could only join the government on the basis of their complete acceptance of the programme of Soviet power aimed at tackling the tasks of the socialist revolution.

At first, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries did not accept the Bolsheviks' proposal, desiring to avoid a decisive break with the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and other parties hostile to this programme. But agreement on a government bloc was reached in November. Soon the People's Commissariat of Agriculture was headed by the Left Socialist-Revolutionary A. L. Kolegayev; P. P. Proshyan became People's Commissar of Post and Telegraph and I. Z. Steinberg—People's Commissar of Justice. At that time a considerable part of the peasants leant towards the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the alliance of workers and poor peasants was the basis of agreement. This alliance of the two parties, Lenin considered, could be an "honest coalition" because "there is *no* radical divergence of interests between the wage-workers and the working and exploited peasants".¹

In the multiparty ARCEC and local Soviets Lenin and the other Bolsheviks had to carry on a daily fight against the wavering of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and other parties. Though having to recognise that the Soviet Government was doing its utmost to implement the working people's democratic demands, these parties, nevertheless, not infrequently defended the enemies of the Revolution, who often draped themselves in the banner of "democracy". At a session of the ARCEC on November 4 (17) the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, supported by an opposition group of Bolsheviks, criticised the shutting down of several right-wing bourgeois newspapers and the decree on the press adopted by the Council of People's Commissars. Lenin's reply to them was: "We cannot provide the bourgeoisie with an opportunity for slandering us.... If we are to advance to socialism we cannot allow Kaledin's bombs to be reinforced by the bombs of falsehood."²

An attempt to pass a vote of no confidence in the Council of People's Commissars in this connection was defeated. At a session of the Petrograd Soviet with frontline representatives Lenin rejected the attempts of the conciliators to prevent the arrest of saboteurs, saying: "Indeed, we have made arrests; today we arrested the director of the State Bank. We are accused of resorting to terrorism, but we

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Extraordinary All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies", "Alliance Between the Workers and the Working and Exploited Peasants", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 331-33.

² V.I. Lenin, "Meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, November 4 (17), 1917", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 285.

have not resorted, and I hope will not resort, to the terrorism of the French revolutionaries who guillotined unarmed men.”¹

The Cadet Party became the soul and active organiser of the bourgeois counter-revolution. The ministers of the overthrown Provisional Government consolidated their old ties with the embassies and missions of the Entente. On November 28 (December 11), the Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks held a not very big, but noisy anti-Soviet demonstration. Armed mutineers wanted to seize the Taurida Palace. The CPC responded by passing a decision on the arrest of the leaders of civil war against the Revolution. The Cadet Party was declared a party of enemies of the people, and the members of its leading bodies were subject to arrest and trial by revolutionary tribunals. Explaining the need for this measure at the session of the ARCEC, Lenin stressed that “the Kaledinite bourgeois elements have started a civil war”. He then said: “When a revolutionary class is fighting the propertied classes that offer resistance, the resistance must be crushed. And we shall crush the resistance of the propertied classes, using the same means as they used to crush the proletariat—no other means have been invented”.²

However, the revolutionary agencies of coercion that the Soviet Government had to build up were fundamentally new. The police, army and judicial apparatus of the bourgeois-landowner state, designed for suppressing the working people, could not be employed, and were disbanded. In their place new machinery of the proletarian state was being created. Everywhere the Soviets formed a standing workers’ militia and put it in charge of preserving revolutionary order. In November a decree was issued on the organisation of a new judicial system which involved direct democratic election of judges with the right to recall them and open court proceedings with the right of the accused to defence. Revolutionary tribunals were instituted to hear the cases of counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs.

On December 7 (20) a special body to fight counter-revolution was set up, the All-Russia Extraordinary Commission (Cheka). It was headed by a courageous revolutionary, Felix Dzerzhinsky, one of Lenin’s closest associates. Party organisations and trade unions detached some of the best of their cadres, workers and seamen, to work under the Commission. Already in its first weeks of operation the Cheka had unearthed several anti-Soviet conspiracies, traced links between foreign embassies (American, French) and the conspirators, and wiped out several anarchist bands. The Cheka, Lenin said later, “was our

¹ V.I. Lenin, “Speech at a Joint Meeting of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies and Delegates from the Fronts, November 4 (17), 1917”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 294.

² V.I. Lenin, “Meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, December 1(14), 1917”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 353, 354.

effective weapon against the numerous plots and numerous attacks on Soviet power made by people who were infinitely stronger than us".¹

The Cheka combined implacability toward the enemies of the Revolution with humanity. In his instructions to his men Dzerzhinsky wrote: "The invasion of a private flat by armed people and deprivation of guilty people of their freedom are an evil to which we still have to resort at the present time so that good and truth can prevail. But it must always be remembered that it is an evil, and that our job, in employing this evil, is to eradicate the need to resort to this means in the future. Therefore let all those who are ordered to carry out a search, deprive a person of his liberty and hold him in prison display care for the people arrested and searched, let them be much more courteous with them than even with their own relatives, remembering that the person deprived of liberty cannot defend himself and that he is in our power. Each of us must remember also that he is a representative of Soviet power, of the workers and peasants, and that any bawling, rudeness, impropriety and discourtesy, is a blot that will stain this power."²

The Communist Party had to organise defence of the new Republic against external and internal enemies. It realised that the defence against the attacks of internal counter-revolution and international imperialism would be impossible by merely the available forces of the worker Red Guard. It was also impossible to count on the old army. Although it numbered 7 million, it was not an efficient fighting force: the soldiers, exhausted by almost four years of imperialist war, were dispersing to their homes. The Party had to build armed forces of the proletarian state. Marxists had not posed this problem previously, even in theory. The programmes of Social-Democratic Parties demanded the abolition of standing armies and their replacement by universal arming of the people.

In the new circumstances it was concluded that the proletarian state had to create its own armed organisation. On January 15 (28), 1918, the Soviet Government decreed the organisation of a Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. It was to be built as a class army, and to be composed of "the most class-conscious and organised elements of the masses of the working people".³ Such an army could only be built, to begin with, on a voluntary basis. In view of the soldiers' and all working people's utter fatigue from the war, the Party

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Ninth All-Russia Congress of Soviets", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33 p. 175.

² *From the History of the All-Russia Extraordinary Commission. 1917-1921.*
A Collection of Documents, Moscow, 1958, pp. 103-04 (in Russian).

³ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. I, p. 356.

called into the Red Army only those who volunteered to take up defence of socialist revolution and proletarian state, primarily workers.

Meantime, the counter-revolutionaries hatched revolts. Their leaders (from the overthrown Kerensky and Atamans Kaledin and Dutov to the Cadet Milyukov, the Socialist-Revolutionary Chernov, and the Menshevik Tsereteli) used the call for a Constituent Assembly as a cover. The same politicians who had been in power before the October Revolution and had put off the elections when they headed the Commission on elections for the Constituent Assembly, now set up a Union to Defend the Constituent Assembly when the Council of People's Commissars had decided to hold them on the date the Provisional Government had set, viz., November 12. Their idea was simple: to counterpose the Assembly to the Soviets, to get a majority in the Assembly, and then, with its aid, to finish with Soviet power.

As was to be expected, the results of the elections to the Assembly did not reflect the radical change that had taken place in the country. They were carried out according to party ballots drawn up before October. Thus, voters balloted for a single Socialist-Revolutionary ticket, although that party had split, with its Left supporting Soviet power, and the Right (predominating in the lists of candidates) its unrelenting enemies. In many places Soviet power was only being established at the time of the elections, and in agrarian areas Socialist-Revolutionary cum Menshevik land councils (*zemstvos*) ruled the roost. Considerable numbers of the working people, especially the peasantry, had not yet become aware of the scope and significance of the October Revolution and its decrees on peace and the land, while the distribution of seats gave priority to agrarian areas over industrial ones. The organisation of the elections evoked thousands of complaints about the work of the electoral commissions which had been set up under the Provisional Government and which permitted many oversights and abuses.

The final results for 75 constituencies showed that more than half of the electorate went to the polls (in the capitals around 70 per cent). The bourgeois parties suffered a crushing defeat; only 17 per cent voted for them, mainly for the Cadets. But the petty-bourgeois parties (including ethnic ones), primarily the Socialist-Revolutionaries, received 59 per cent of the votes. This was evidence both of the political backwardness of the rural areas and of the influence of nationalists on the periphery of Russia, where bitter civil war soon developed.

The Bolsheviks received 24 per cent of the votes cast. In the provincial and regional centres, however, the picture was different: there the Bolsheviks led with 36.5 per cent, the Cadets received 23.9 per cent, the Socialist-Revolutionaries 14.5 per cent, and the Men-

sheviks 5.8 per cent. In the army 40.9 per cent voted for the Bolsheviks (61 per cent on the Northern Front, 67 per cent on the Western Front, 57.7 per cent in the Baltic Fleet), 38.4 per cent for the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and 1.3 per cent for the Cadets. In the garrisons of the rear 57.8 per cent voted for the Bolsheviks. In the major centres they had an overall majority (population and garrison combined). In Petrograd and Moscow, for example, they received 46.4 per cent of the vote, but in their garrisons more than 70 per cent. There was a similar situation in Tver, Yaroslavl, Ivanovo, Krasnoyarsk, Tomsk, Revel, etc.¹ It is noteworthy that in constituencies where the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries ran on separate ballots they received more votes than the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries (in Petrograd 150,000 and less than 5,000 respectively, in the Baltic Fleet more than 30,000 against around 14,000).² For the country as a whole, however, there was not, as Lenin remarked, "even a formal correspondence between the will of the mass of the electors and the composition of the elected Constituent Assembly".³

The Constituent Assembly lagged behind historic developments. Its role had already been essentially played by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, which had immediately decided the key issues, viz., peace, the land and the establishment of worker and peasant power. It had decided them, moreover, more rapidly and businesslike than any bourgeois parliament had ever decided such matters. There was no objective necessity for a Constituent Assembly any longer. But many peasants and some workers still believed in it and saw in it a "national" representation. Only the convening of the Constituent Assembly and open, public comparison of its programme with that of the Soviet authorities could help the masses get rid of their parliamentary illusions and convince them from their own experience that Soviet power expressed their main hopes and demands better.

In early January Lenin drafted a Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People which, declaring Russia a Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, summed up the people's main gains since the October Revolution. Intended to be presented to the Constituent Assembly as a draft resolution, the Declaration said in conclusion: "Supporting Soviet power and the decrees of the Council of People's Commissars, the Constituent Assembly considers that its own task is confined to establishing the funda-

¹ O.N. Znamensky, *The All-Russia Constituent Assembly. History of Its Convening and Political Collapse*, Leningrad, 1976, pp. 260-78 (in Russian).

² K.V. Gusev, Kh.A. Eritsian, *From Conciliation to Counter-Revolution*, Moscow, 1968, p. 436 (in Russian).

³ V.I. Lenin, "Theses on the Constituent Assembly", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 380.

mental principles of the socialist reconstruction of society."¹ The Declaration was adopted by a majority of votes at a session of the ARCEC on January 3 (16), 1918, with two against and one abstention. The next day it was published in the press.

On the day of the opening of the Constituent Assembly, January 5 (18), the counter-revolutionary parties and organisations got ready to hold an armed demonstration in front of the Taurida Palace under the slogan "All Power to the Constituent Assembly!", calculating to turn it into an uprising and to seize the Smolny. But the mood of the masses, and the measures taken by the Soviet authorities, forced the organisers to abandon their intention. The demonstration, in which there were almost no workers or soldiers, passed off without spirit, attempts at provocation were put a stop to.

The composition of those attending the session of the Constituent Assembly was roughly as follows: 259 Socialist-Revolutionaries, 136 Bolsheviks, 40 Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, 13 Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionaries, 5 Mensheviks, and 10 representatives of minor parties. The Cadet deputies did not register.² The session was opened in the name of the ARCEC by Sverdlov, who read out the Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People and moved its adoption. The Socialist-Revolutionary V. M. Chernov was elected chairman of the Assembly by the votes of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. He and other speakers tried to proclaim the Assembly the supreme power in the country and argued against discussing the Declaration. It is noteworthy, however, that the enemies of the Revolution could not avoid recognising that the transfer of all the land to the people's possession was irreversible, and could not ignore the demand for a universal democratic peace (although they tried to make it dependent on the Entente Powers). They were also forced to agree with the formation of a federal republic (but not, needless to say, a Soviet one). "What Chernov prattled about," wrote *Pravda*, "was, in fact, a complete yielding (verbally, of course) to the Soviet platform: here and now peace, and land, and workers' control."³

When there were no hopes left of real recognition of Soviet power and its gains by the Assembly, a statement by the Bolshevik group, drafted by Lenin, was made public in the early hours of the morning: "Refusing for a single moment to cover up the crimes of the enemies of the people, we make this announcement of our withdrawal from the Constituent Assembly, leaving it to Soviet power to take the final decision on the attitude to the counter-revolutionary section of the Constituent Assembly."⁴ An hour later, the Left Socialist-

¹ V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 425.

² O.N. Znamensky, *op. cit.*, pp. 331-41.

³ *Pravda*, January 7 (20), 1918.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Declaration of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks) Group at the

Revolutionaries condemned the majority's intention to take the road of fighting Soviet power and also left the Assembly. At 4.00 a.m. the commander of the guard of the Taurida Palace, the seaman A. G. Zheleznyakov, suggested to the chairman Chernov, "that everyone present quit the conference hall because the guard is tired".¹ On the night of January 6 (19), 1918, the ARCEC issued a decree dissolving the Constituent Assembly.²

In spite of various inventions still employed by Western authors that the Bolsheviks used force to break up the Constituent Assembly, it in fact buried itself politically when it went against the will of the people and turned itself into a cover of bourgeois counter-revolution striving to overthrow the power of the Soviets. At a session of the ARCEC Lenin said: "The people wanted the Constituent Assembly summoned, and we summoned it. But they sensed immediately what this famous Constituent Assembly really was. And now we have carried out the will of the people, which is—All power to the Soviets!"³ Resolutions were adopted at numerous meetings approving dissolution of the Assembly. More than two years later Lenin again remarked that the workers, soldiers and peasants in Russia had been "exceptionally well prepared to accept the Soviet system and to disband the most democratic of bourgeois parliaments".⁴

Soviet government, which false defenders of democracy have accused of ignoring and suppressing "freedoms", in fact carried out vast democratic reforms in the very first months after the October Revolution, such as had not been tackled in the eight months when the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties had been in office.

All the anti-democratic institutions inherited from tsarism were eradicated root and branch. The division into estates of the realm, titles and privileges were abolished, the inequality of women in all spheres of public affairs was lifted, freedom of marriage and divorce was established, freedom of conscience was proclaimed, the Church was separated from the state, and the schools were freed from the tutelage of the Church. Demands were thus met that had long been made by bourgeois democracy, but which had never been carried out anywhere so fully and to such an extent. At the end of December 1917, Lenin wrote: "In a matter of weeks the undemocratic institu-

Constituent Assembly Meeting, January 5 (18), 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 430.

¹ *The All-Russia Constituent Assembly*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1930, pp. 109, 110, 112-13 (in Russian).

² *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. I, pp. 335-36.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Speech on the Dissolution of the Constituent Assembly Delivered to the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, January 6 (19), 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 440.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1974, pp. 59-60.

tions in the army, the countryside and industry have been almost completely destroyed. There is no other way—there can be no other way—to socialism save through such destruction.”¹

But Soviet power was not limited to that. At the same time, and to no less an extent, it manifested its real democratic nature: conditions were provided to develop the “independent initiative of the workers, and of all the working and exploited people generally, develop it as widely as possible in creative *organisational* work, ... [in] the *independent* creation of a new life,” and in the competition “in which *talented organisers* should come to the fore *in practice* and be promoted to work in state administration”.²

The very first appeal of the Council of People’s Commissars to the public said: “Comrades, working people! Remember that now *you yourselves* are at the helm of the state. No one will help you if you yourselves do not unite and take into *your* hands *all affairs* of the state. *Your* Soviets are from now on the organs of state authority, legislative bodies with full powers.

“Rally around your Soviets. Strengthen them. Get on with the job yourselves; begin right at the bottom, do not wait for anyone.”³

The best representatives of the working class became members of Soviet administration. Many of them already had some experience of administrative work in the Soviets, trade unions, and workers’ control agencies before the Revolution. Workers formed the core of the various People’s Commissariats—of Foreign Affairs, Railways, Labour, and Internal Affairs—that replaced dissolved ministries. Among the first on staff of the People’s Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, for example, were Bolshevik workers from the Siemens-Schuckert works on Vasilyevski Island in Petrograd. The first staff members of the People’s Commissariat of Labour were chemical workers from the Urals and people from the metal workers’ trade union, and its board also included representatives of the textile workers’ and tanners’ unions.

Workers constituted the largest group among the delegates to the supreme body, the All-Russia Congress of Soviets. In the 3rd and 4th Congresses, convened in 1918, for example, they on the average accounted for 39.6 per cent. The high proportion of workers in the system of Soviets, especially in its upper echelons, was partly due to the fact that, following the practice established before the October Revolution, the deputies to city Soviets were elected on the production principle—at mills, factories and other work places. Rela-

¹ V.I. Lenin, “Fear of the Collapse of the Old and the Fight for the New”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 400.

² V.I. Lenin, “How to Organise Competition?”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 409, 415.

³ V.I. Lenin, “To the Population”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 297.

tively more representatives of city Soviets than peasant ones were delegated to congresses.

The leading role of the working class as the most class-conscious and staunchest fighter for socialism was ensured by a preponderance of representatives of its vanguard, the Communist Party, in the Soviets. In 1918, Communists and their supporters were 71.9 per cent of the delegates to All-Russia Congresses,¹ 52.4 per cent to provincial congresses in the first half of the year and 90.3 per cent in the second half, and to rural congresses 48.4 and 72.8 per cent respectively.² The Communist Party soon formulated the principle of leadership of the agencies of state authority as follows: "The Party should carry out its decisions through Soviet bodies, *within the context of the Soviet Constitution*. The Party strives to *guide the activity of Soviets*, but not to replace them."³

One of the most complicated problems in building the proletarian state was that of creating administrative bodies. Both before and in the early days after the October Revolution, anti-Soviet forces placed great hopes in the proletariat's lack of knowledge and experience of administration. They taunted the Bolsheviks that the socialist revolution was doomed because the proletariat would not know how to govern the state. Lenin called it an absurd and scurrilous prejudice, the idea spread by the exploiters that only the upper classes, only the rich, could govern the state. But he did not underestimate the difficulties connected with sabotage by old officials and some of the intelligentsia, the workers' lack of the necessary skills and even, not infrequently, of elementary literacy, because tsarism and the bourgeoisie had barred them from education.

The training of personnel on a national scale in schools and colleges needed time. So there was only one way out—to teach workers and peasants the art of administration in practical work, without the fear of possible mistakes. Lenin later wrote that "among the rank-and-file workers and peasants there are very many people devoted to the interests of the working masses and capable of undertaking the work of leadership. Among them there are many with a talent for organisation and administration, to whom capitalism gave no opportunity and whom we are helping and must help in every way to come to the fore and take up the work of building socialism."⁴

¹ G.A. Trukan, *The Working Class in the Struggle for the Victory and Consolidation of Soviet Power*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 190, 191 (in Russian).

² *Five Years of Soviet Power*, Moscow, 1922, p. 89 (in Russian).

³ *The CPSU in Resolutions of Congresses, Conferences and CC Meetings*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1970, p. 77 (in Russian).

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "The Workers' State and Party Work", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, 1977, p. 64.

The results of the first months of building the workers' and peasants' state were summed up by the 3rd Congress of Soviets in January 1918. The merging of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies had by then been completed, which reflected the strengthening of the alliance of the working class and the labouring peasantry. The Congress unanimously adopted the Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People that the Constituent Assembly had refused to consider. In his report on the work of the CPC, Lenin remarked: "I have no illusions about our having only just entered the period of transition to socialism, about not yet having reached socialism. But if you say that our state is a socialist Republic of Soviets, you will be right."¹ Sovereignty of the Soviets was a most important principle of the state system. "The democratism of Soviet power and its socialist nature," Lenin wrote, "are expressed in the fact

"that the supreme state authority is vested in the Soviets, which are made up of representatives of the working people (workers, soldiers and peasants), freely elected and removable at any time by the masses hitherto oppressed by capital;

"that the local Soviets freely amalgamate on a basis of democratic centralism, into a single federal union as represented by the Soviet state power of the Russian Soviet Republic;

"that the Soviets concentrate in their hands not only the legislative power and supervision of law enforcement, but direct enforcement of the laws through all the members of the Soviets with a view to a gradual transition to the performance of legislative functions and state administration by the whole working population."²

In that description one can clearly trace the link between the plans Lenin expressed on the eve of the October Revolution drawing on the experience of the Paris Commune (especially in *The State and Revolution*) and the realities that were taking shape in Soviet Russia. Not only was the elective nature of all Soviets of great importance but also the electors' right to recall their delegates. Lenin considered that right a fundamental tenet of genuine democracy, all but forgotten by bourgeois parliamentarians. Already on November 21 (December 4), 1917, the ARCEC issued a special decree granting congresses of Soviets the right to schedule re-elections to all representative institutions, and obliging the Soviets to schedule re-elections on the demand of more than half of the electorate.³

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 464.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Democratism and Socialist Nature of Soviet Power", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, 1969, p. 100.

³ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. I, pp. 116-19.

The Soviet system replaced the bureaucratic centralism of the bourgeois state by democratic centralism, whereby leadership from one centre and subordination of the local bodies to the centre were combined with broad initiative and independence of local Soviets in managing local affairs. "We are for democratic centralism," Lenin wrote. "And it must be clearly understood how vastly different democratic centralism is from bureaucratic centralism on the one hand, and from anarchism on the other... Centralism, understood in a truly democratic sense, presupposes the possibility, created for the first time in history, of a full and unhampered development not only of specific local features, but also of local inventiveness, local initiative, of diverse ways, methods and means of progress to the common goal."¹

The Soviet state was built on a multinational basis. The 2nd All-Russia Congress of Soviets guaranteed "all the nations inhabiting Russia the genuine right to self-determination".² The basic principles of the Soviet ethnic-state structure were laid down in the Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia, and in the Appeal to the Working Muslims of Russia and the East. The latter said: "Henceforth your faith and customs, your national and cultural institutions are declared free and inviolable. You will arrange your national affairs freely and unhindered. You have the right to that. Know that your rights, like those of all the nations of Russia, are protected by the whole might of the Revolution and its agencies, the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies."³

The principles proclaimed were strictly implemented. Although the counter-revolutionary Ukrainian Central Rada had seized power in the Ukraine, the Soviet Government declared in December 1917 that it recognised "the People's Ukrainian Republic, and its right to secede from Russia or enter into a treaty with the Russian Republic of federal or similar relations between them".⁴ When the Seim of the Finnish bourgeois republic adopted the Declaration of the Independence of Finland the Soviet Government recognised its state independence in a decree of December 18 (31), 1917, and Lenin personally handed the decree to the Prime Minister, P. E. Svinhufvud who came to Petrograd. Shortly afterwards the Government of the RSFSR by a special decree repudiated all treaties and acts concluded by the former government of the Russian Empire

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Original Version of the Article 'The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, 1965, pp. 207, 208.

² V.I. Lenin, "Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets...", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 247.

³ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. I, pp. 113-14.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Manifesto to the Ukrainian People with an Ultimatum to the Ukrainian Rada", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 361.

on the partition of Poland "in view of their contradiction to the principle of self-determination of nations and the revolutionary sense of justice of the Russian people who recognise the Polish people's inalienable right to independence and unity."¹ That laid a firm legal and political foundation for the restoration of the independence of Poland.

Recognition of the right to self-determination, including freedom to secede, did not in the least exclude but rather presumed Communists' conviction of the need for a voluntary union of the liberated nations. The principle of federation became a sure step toward a stable association of the various nationalities of Russia in a single, democratic, centralised Soviet state. When in December 1917 the All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets declared the Ukraine a Soviet republic as a "federated part of the Russian Republic"², that was the first concrete decision about a Soviet Federation as the form of constitutional structure of the socialist multinational state.

The Third Congress of Soviets in January 1918 legislated that "the Soviet Russian Republic is established on the basis of a free union of free nations, as a federation of Soviet national republics." This was developed in a resolution on the federal institutions of the Russian Republic, which noted that future members of the Federation would be given representation at All-Russia Congresses of Soviets, in the ARCEC, and in the central government, the Council of People's Commissars.³ Speaking at the Congress about the new revolutionary federation, Lenin stressed: "We do not rule by dividing, as ancient Rome's harsh maxim required, but by uniting all the working people with the unbreakable bonds of living interests and a sense of class. This our union, our new state is sounder than power based on violence which keeps artificial state entities hammered together with lies and bayonets in the way the imperialists want them.... This federation is invincible and will grow quite freely, without the help of lies or bayonets. The laws and the state system which we are creating over here are the best earnest of its invincibility."⁴

Along with the Soviet federation Soviet national autonomy was given shape, a most important constitutional form of free development and fraternal co-operation of nations and nationalities. Having adopted the course of drawing all the nationalities of the coun-

¹ *Documents of the Foreign Policy of the USSR*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1957, pp. 71, 458-60 (in Russian).

² *The Formation of the USSR. A Collection of Documents*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1949, p. 74 (in Russian).

³ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. I, pp. 341, 350.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 480-81.

try into the stream of general democratic and socialist reforms, Soviet government took into account the concrete conditions of the historical development of each nation and nationality, and the level of economic, political and cultural development they had reached. In the autonomous national republics, all administrative, cultural and political activity was aimed to introduce the local population gradually to active involvement in administration, with due account for local traditions and customs.

On April 30, 1918 the Fifth All-Turkestan Congress of Soviets in Tashkent resolved to form a Turkestan Soviet Republic as an autonomous part of the Russian Soviet Federation. The Turkestan Autonomous Republic itself was multinational: its population consisted of Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kirghizes, Tajiks, Turkmens, and Kara-Kalpaks. The Congress elected a CEC of Turkestan headed by an old Bolshevik, P. A. Kobozev, which for the first time included representatives of the indigenous nationalities.

The policy of the Bolsheviks in ethnic relations and the fraternal, selfless aid of the Russian workers to all the nations of Russia set the stage for restructuring all social relations on a basis of friendship of nations and proletarian internationalism. However, national hostility, distrust and enmity propagated and fanned for ages by the exploiters could not be vanquished immediately. Time and no little effort were needed to root out both Great Russian chauvinism and local nationalism.

In March 1918, elaborating on important matters of the constitutional system, Lenin said at the Seventh Congress of the RCP(B): "When the workers set up their own state they realised that the old concept of democracy—bourgeois democracy—had been surpassed in the process of the development of our revolution. We have arrived at a type of democracy that has never existed anywhere in Western Europe. It had its prototype only in the Paris Commune."¹

While stressing that only the first steps had been taken toward passing to socialism, Lenin saw the state of a *new type* as the main accomplishment made so far on that road: "Despite all the crudity and lack of discipline that exists in the Soviets—this is a survival of the petty-bourgeois nature of our country—despite all that the new type of state has been created by the masses of the people.... Soviet power is a new type of state without a bureaucracy, without police, without a regular army, a state in which bourgeois democracy has been replaced by a new democracy, a democracy that brings to the fore the vanguard of the working people, gives them legisla-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 126.

tive and executive authority, makes them responsible for military defence and creates state machinery that can re-educate the masses."¹

At the same time he warned against running ahead and prematurely proclaiming the withering away of the state (that "would distort the historical perspective"), and against including a description of the socialist system in its developed form, i.e. communism, in the Party Programme ("the bricks of which socialism will be composed have not yet been made").

The Soviet system was ratified by the Constitution of the RSFSR adopted on July 10, 1918 by the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets. This was the first constitution in history stipulating that "power must belong wholly and exclusively to the working masses and their plenipotentiary representatives—the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies" (Article 7). This Constitution, Lenin noted, "was not drawn up in a study, and was not foisted on the working people by bourgeois lawyers. No, this Constitution grew up in the course of the development of the class struggle in proportion as class contradictions matured."² It confirmed the transfer of the main means of production to people's ownership, and the free union and equal rights of all races and nationalities, and guaranteed freedom of association, meeting, conscience and the press. But unlike bourgeois constitutions it switched the centre of gravity from formal recognition of freedom and equality to actually guaranteeing democracy and freedom for the broad masses of the working people previously deprived of them.

While formulating and consolidating the general principles of the new, proletarian democracy, the Soviet Constitution at the same time reflected certain specific features of the revolution in Russia. The exceptionally sharp class struggle and the fierce resistance of the overthrown classes called for restrictions on the rights of the non-working groups of the population: the exploiter elements (2 to 3 per cent of the adult population) were deprived of the franchise; the working class was given priority in the representation in the Soviets and their congresses; multi-stage elections and open voting by show of hands were practised. Lenin considered these features to be temporary, and not necessarily applicable in other countries.³

The Constitution of the RSFSR gave the structure of Soviet government the necessary integral shape. The ideas of people's power, proletarian democracy and internationalism permeated all

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, 1977, p. 301.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 256.

its articles. Now, Lenin said, the working people of all countries would see that the Soviet Constitution—the fundamental law of the Russian Socialist Federative Republic—reflected the ideals of the proletariat of the whole world.¹

THE FIRST REVOLUTIONARY REFORMS IN THE ECONOMY

The winning of political power by the Russian working class opened the road to building a socialist society. The job ahead now was to begin to carry out socialist reforms in all spheres of the country's affairs, and above all in the economy. The complicated tasks of the transition period from capitalism to socialism had to be tackled in particularly difficult conditions: the rather backward economy had been severely damaged by more than 3 years of the imperialist war, and the first proletarian state in the world was encircled by hostile capitalist countries. It was impossible to rely on the old agencies of prerevolutionary Russia, set up to control business activity in the interests of the exploiters. A fundamentally different economic machinery was needed, new in its class essence, organisational forms, and methods of management, because socialist production called for organising "an extremely intricate and delicate system of new organisational relationships extending to the planned production and distribution of the goods required for the existence of tens of millions of people."²

It was hard to retain even those parts of the old machinery that performed accounting and recording, managerial and similar functions (post and telegraph, banks, industry and transport management) because many administrators, experts and civil servants refused to work for the Soviet authorities. Many links therefore had to be broken more quickly and radically than had been intended. The local government authorities elected under the Provisional Government (city and county councils) were dissolved, although it had been intended to employ them to carry on urgent economic matters.

Workers' control over production and distribution became, as Lenin had foreseen, one of the most important transitional measures for organising the new economic administration and business management. The regulations issued by the Soviet Government on November 14 (27), 1917 transferred control over all the operations

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at a Meeting in Khamovniki District, July 26, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 551.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 241.

of enterprises to the central and local workers' control councils.¹ A system of workers' control agencies soon covered the whole country. It tackled a number of inter-related tasks, helping break up the old management apparatus that operated against the revolution and organise the work of enterprises. It served as a school of management and training of personnel for running the economy, "the first fundamental step that every socialist, workers' government has to take".²

In Moscow, for example, the control commission at a munitions factory consisted of four manual workers and one member of the staff. When the company's board of directors decided to close the works on the pretext of an absence of orders, the commission refused to let them do so and established its own control over the board's activity. Realising that the management was sabotaging, the commission began to concern itself much more actively with the organisation of production and marketing of output. And, operating jointly with the works committee, it little by little delved into management and made the managerial staff work or else decided matters itself. A general meeting of the workers elected the factory commissar, Perfiliev, chairman of the district Bolshevik committee and one of the most active members of the control commission. The factory began to make a profit, repairs were carried out, and a workers' club, canteen and bathhouse were opened.³

Workers' control in enterprises was only an elementary school of the management of production. The workers assimilated the ABCs, not simply because of lack of education but also because just at the enterprise it was difficult to understand all the intricate economic ties, the more so because the head offices of many local enterprises were in Moscow or Petrograd. Yet the cadres for managing the national economy came for the most part from this school. For example, 79.8 per cent of the workers elected to the boards of 63 nationalised textile mills in the Moscow industrial region had previously been members of control commissions and works committees.⁴

The Executive Committees of Soviets set up economic and management departments to cope with business problems. They formed the basis of Councils of the Economy (*sovnarkhoz*) that were set

¹ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. I, pp. 83-85.

² V.I. Lenin, "Extraordinary Sixth All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants', Cossacks' and Red Army Deputies, November 6-9, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 139.

³ *The Working Class of Soviet Russia in the First Year of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, Moscow, 1964, pp. 140-42.

⁴ V.Z. Drobizhev, "A Contribution to the History of Workers' Management Bodies in Industrial Enterprises in 1917-1918", *Istoriya SSSR*, 1957, No. 3, pp. 45, 47.

up soon afterwards with the help of trade unions and works committees. A Supreme Economic Council was set up under the Council of People's Commissars by a decree of the ARCEC of December 2(15), 1917. Lenin's idea was that it should become a militant and efficient agency for fighting the capitalists and landlords in the economy, similar to the Council of People's Commissars in politics. The most class-conscious, politically active workers, representatives of trade unions and works committees, were despatched to the economic councils. In the Supreme Economic Council an important role was played by the workers M.N. Zhivotov, a fitter and chairman of the works committee of the power station of the 1886 Company, a Communist since 1904, N. K. Antipov, a toolmaker at the New Parviainen Works in Petrograd, a Party member since 1912, and V. Y. Chubar, a turner by trade, member of the RSDLP(B) since 1907 and chairman of the committee of the Artillery Works.

The Communist Party played a major role in picking and recommending candidates for the economic management agencies. Its Central Committee and local organisations recommended the trade unions and workers' collectives people who had shown organisational capacities and a readiness to serve the workers' interests. They were mainly Communists who set the tone at work and helped carry out Party policy in economic matters.

The system of economic councils was a necessary precondition for carrying out socialist reforms of the economy, the most important part of this endeavour being nationalisation of the banks and major industries. The Soviet working class avoided the mistake of the Paris Commune: it took over the State Bank, putting it under the control of its state bodies. All private banks and the post and telegraph services were also nationalised.

A typical feature of the nationalisation of industry was that it began with separate enterprises. The initiative came from the workers themselves. The Soviet Government tried to give their actions a planned character, requiring that nationalisation should not lead to a fall in production, and should reinforce work discipline. In April 1918 Lenin said at a session of the ARCEC: "I told every workers' delegation with which I had to deal when they came to me and complained that their factory was at a standstill: you would like your factory to be confiscated. Very well, we have blank forms for a decree ready, they can be signed in a minute.... But tell us: have you learned how to take over production and have you calculated what you will produce? Do you know the connection between what you are producing and the Russian and international market?"¹

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Session of the All-Russia C.E.C., April 29, 1918", *Collected Works*. Vol. 27, p. 297.

A second feature of nationalisation was its rapidity. At first it was seen as a gradual process, but the situation of acute class struggle and of the capitalists' mass sabotage speeded it up. Between November 1917 and March 1918, 836 nationalisation orders were issued.¹ By the spring of 1918, the key positions in the economy, the biggest factories, mills, and banks, transport and foreign trade had been taken over by the Soviet Government. To the enemies' accusations that the Bolsheviks were making a "Red Guard attack" on capital Lenin replied that such an attack was quite opportune since capital had resisted militarily and by sabotage. The attack brought victory to the new mode of production.

A third feature of the nationalisation was that the means of production passed to the Soviet Government without any compensation for the owners. Lenin considered it admissible for the proletariat to buy the capitalists out, so as to easier maintain the productive forces, but only if they accepted nationalisation peacefully.² However, the bourgeoisie declared war on the Soviets, and in those circumstances it was necessary to act very radically, to confiscate.

Right from the start the Soviet authorities began to carry out measures aimed at an immediate improvement in the material position and working conditions of the working class. On October 29 (November 11), 1917, the Council of People's Commissars already endorsed a decree on the eight-hour work day. A six-hour day was established for adolescents under 18 years of age. Employment of women and juveniles was banned at night, underground, and on overtime.³ The proletariat of Russia and other countries had been fighting for decades for an eight-hour day. Soviet power established it immediately for all workers in any enterprise, without distinction of sex, nationality or religious persuasion. But in introducing it the Soviet authorities had to overcome the sabotage of owners and reckon with local conditions. The first steps to regulate wages were also taken.

It was urgent to fight unemployment and famine, since the number of unemployed continued to rise after the October Revolution because of the closures of enterprises, lock-outs and demobilisation in the army. On December 26, 1917 (January 8, 1918), after thorough discussion with the trade unions, regulations of the ARCEC and Supreme Economic Council on unemployment insurance were ap-

¹ V.Z. Drobizhev, "Socialist Nationalisation of Industry in the USSR", *Voprosy istorii*, No 6, 1964, p. 64 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "Report of the Council of People's Commissars to the Extraordinary All-Russia Railwaymen's Congress. January 5-30 (January 18-February 12), 1918, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 495-96.

³ *Collection of the Legislation and Decrees of the Workers' and Peasants' Government*, 1917, No. 1, Art. 7 (in Russian).

proved, establishing benefits in the size of average daily wages.¹ The work of labour exchanges was regulated, and public catering and public works were organised.

State insurance with temporary disability benefits was introduced for all employees by decree of the ARCEC of December 22, 1917 (January 4, 1918), and also paid maternity leave for women workers, and a six-hour day for nursing mothers.² The government provided pensions, benefits and medical care for all workers who had lost means of subsistence because of injury, sickness or old age, and also for those disabled by the imperialist and civil wars. Regular holidays (paid at the average rate of earnings) and state labour protection were instituted for the first time. Child protection measures were implemented, and a new public health system was set up. On October 31, 1918 general regulations on social security for working people were promulgated.³

The Soviet authorities inherited a very acute housing problem from the old system: the workers, as a rule, were cooped up in damp basements, makeshift wooden barracks, shacks and dugouts, all lacking most elementary conveniences, or rented a "corner" (a family actually subrenting a corner of a room, not infrequently, from a tenant—a habitual case) or a bed. In trying to improve the position of the working class as quickly as possible, the Soviet government took the most revolutionary way, already pointed out by Engels: in Petrograd, Moscow, and other cities the Soviets decided to rehouse worker families from quarters unfit or ill-suited for human habitation in the well-appointed houses of the bourgeoisie. In Moscow, 4,000 house properties (one-seventh of the total) were confiscated, in Petrograd 2,900 houses were nationalised, in which one-sixth of the inhabitants lived.⁴ An ARCEC decree of August 20, 1918 abolished private ownership of the big urban real estate which could now be used for public needs. So, despite the immense difficulties, in the first year of Soviet rule major measures had already been implemented in the field of social policy.

While it was the case of preparing and introducing socialist reforms in industry, in the rural areas it was necessary first of all to cope with bourgeois-democratic tasks. The socialist revolution immediately put an end to feudal relations. The Decree on Land met the peasants' age-old hopes, abolishing private ownership of land and transferring use of it to those who tilled it. The lands of the nobility, of the tsar's family and of the monasteries and Church

¹ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. I, pp. 201-205.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 267-76.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1964, pp. 481-94.

⁴ L.K. Bayeva, *The Social Policy of the October Revolution*, Moscow, 1977, pp. 131-34 (in Russian).

were confiscated without compensation. The Decree included the whole of a mandate compiled on the basis of 242 mandates of local Peasants' Soviets and land committees. It called for the banning of purchase and sale of land, mortgaging it, and the employment of hired labour, and proposed the introduction of equalised land-use, i.e., distribution of land according to labour and consumer standards which would be determined locally.

After the October Revolution the Bolsheviks had to explain to the peasants the fallacy of their idea that equalisation would protect them against ruin and exploitation, pointing out that these calamities could only be eliminated by collective land use. But, Lenin said, "as a democratic government, we cannot ignore the decision of the masses of the people, even though we may disagree with it. In the fire of experience, applying the decree in practice, and carrying it out locally, the peasants will themselves realise where the truth lies.... Experience is the best teacher and it will show who is right. Let the peasants solve this problem from one end and we shall solve it from the other".¹ The working class was meeting the peasants' own demands and that ensured it the rural support without which it could not have retained power. Immediately, at one stroke, "the Russian proletariat *won the peasantry* from the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and won them literally *a few hours after* achieving state power." Lenin recalled subsequently: "The Socialist-Revolutionaries fumed and raved, protested and howled that 'the Bolsheviks had stolen their programme', but they were only laughed at for that; a fine party, indeed, which had to be defeated and driven from the government in order that everything in its programme that was revolutionary and of benefit to the working people could be carried out!"²

Communists and workers from the industrial centres went to the rural areas to help the peasants and the local Soviets in carrying out the Decree on Land. The estate owners put up a fierce resistance; during the fight with them the struggle of the poor against the rural bourgeoisie (the kulaks) was sharpened as the latter tried to grab the lion's share of the land of the aristocracy and resisted equal sharing out.

On January 27 (February 9), 1918, the ARCEC passed a Fundamental Statute on Socialisation of the Land. The bill, moved by the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, was considerably revised and amended by a commission of which Lenin was a member, then discussed by the Third Congress of Soviets, and in the main adopted.

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Second All-Russia Congress of [Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies]", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 260-61.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, 1977, p. 265.

The peasants received 150 million hectares gratis; they were freed from the annual payment of rent to the landowners, from outlays on the purchase of land, totalling more than 700 million gold roubles, and of debts to the Peasant Land Bank (more than 1,300 million roubles). The former landowners' implements worth 300 million roubles were also transferred to the peasants.¹ History knows no such radical solution of the agrarian problem. No bourgeois revolution had satisfied the peasantry expectations as decisively and as fully as the proletarian revolution did. And that consolidated the revolutionary alliance of the working class with the poorest peasantry.

THE SOVIET REPUBLIC'S FIGHT FOR PEACE

The first act of the October Revolution and of Soviet government was the Decree on Peace drawn up by Lenin. It was not a normal official act on a country's withdrawal from a war. It proclaimed quite new principles of foreign policy: the equality and sovereignty of all countries, big and small, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, peace immediately and for all, without annexations and indemnities, based on the self-determination of nations, without secret diplomacy or secret agreements. It was unprecedented also in that it appealed directly to the peoples as well as to governments.

The Decree on Peace declared the imperialist war to be "the greatest crime against humankind". Addressed "in particular to the class-conscious workers of the three most advanced nations of the world"—Great Britain, France and Germany—it recalled their past services in the struggle for progress and socialism, and expressed the hope that the workers would rise to the tasks now incumbent on them of freeing mankind from the horrors of the war and its consequences, would help the Russian proletariat complete the cause of peace it had begun, and together with that the emancipation of the working people and exploited masses of the population from slavery and exploitation of every kind. But it was not sufficient to issue a decree in order to gain peace. To those who pinned their hopes simply on decrees and declarations, and who proposed demanding a democratic peace by ultimatum, Lenin replied that unilateral actions were not enough, and that difficult, drawn-out negotiations with bourgeois arch-politicians were inevitable.² Events soon confirmed his forecast.

¹ *History of the Civil War in the USSR*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1958, pp. 141-42.

² V.I. Lenin, "Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 249-56.

The Entente Powers not only rejected the Soviet peace proposals outright but also immediately took the road of conspiracies, and, later, of the organisation of direct military actions to overthrow Soviet power and pull Russia back again into the imperialist war. The Central Powers acted differently. They decided to exploit the peaceable stand of the Soviets so as to achieve their own expansionist aims, primarily at the expense of Soviet Russia itself. Nevertheless the Soviet Government unswervingly adhered to the principles it had proclaimed.

The Soviet Republic developed a stubborn struggle to stop the imperialist war. The peoples of all countries needed peace. The working people of Russia, who were starting to build a socialist society, needed it especially. Without waiting for an answer via diplomatic channels, the Soviet Government granted the right to all soldiers' committees of frontline units to immediately begin armistice negotiations with the enemy on their own. Dukhonin, already replaced, operating in agreement with the military missions of the Entente, tried to break off the negotiations, but the People's Commissar N. V. Krylenko, having arrived at Dvinsk, sent truce envoys across the front line; agreement on a ceasefire was soon reached with the German authorities. In an appeal to the peoples of the belligerent countries on November 15 (28), the Council of People's Commissars informed them that military operations had been stopped and that negotiations would begin on December 1 (14). "We want a general peace," the Soviet Government again stressed. "But if the bourgeoisie of the Allied countries force us to conclude a separate peace, the responsibility will be wholly theirs."¹ An armistice was signed with Germany and its allies at Brest-Litovsk on December 2 (15), 1917; three days later an armistice was concluded with Turkey.

Although the Entente countries refused to accept the proposal for joint peace negotiations, the Soviet Government again, more than once, invited them to join the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk.

The ruling circles of Germany reckoned that, having ended the war in the east, they would be able to concentrate all their forces on the Western Front. At the same time they had by no means decided to abandon seizing the territory of Soviet Russia and pillaging its wealth. In January 1918 the German side, throwing off the verbal mask, presented expansionist conditions that meant subjection of the territory of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to Germany. The Soviet delegation continued to defend its proposal for a peace without annexations and indemnities, for recognition of the equality of all nations and their right to free self-determina-

¹ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. I, pp. 86-88.

tion, and for the withdrawal of all troops from the territories occupied. Two opposite conceptions of peace thus clashed: the imperialist and the proletarian, socialist.

When it became clear that the German imperialists intended to force an annexationist peace on Soviet Russia, acute disagreements developed in the leadership of the Bolshevik Party. The Moscow Regional Bureau and the Petersburg Committee of the Party had already at the end of December gone on record for a breaking off of the peace negotiations and waging a revolutionary war.¹ Trotsky, who led the Soviet delegation at Brest-Litovsk, informed Lenin on January 3 (16), 1918 that he considered it necessary to break off the negotiations, to declare the state of war ended, and to refuse to sign the annexationist peace. In reply Lenin wrote his "Theses on Immediate Conclusion of a Separate and Annexationist Peace" and presented them on January 8 (21) to an emergency meeting of members of the Central Committee and Party workers. After a heated discussion, 32 of the 63 present supported the slogan of revolutionary war. Trotsky's proposal, "neither peace nor war" received 16 votes. Only 15 persons voted for Lenin's proposal to sign the peace.²

The hub of the intricate tangle of theoretical and practical political disputes that raged around this issue was the problem of understanding the national and international tasks of the socialist revolution and their relationship in the new historical conditions created by victory of the October Revolution and the lag in the revolution in Europe.

All Communists recognised three fundamental conditions as premises. (1) The socialist revolution is an international event. Lenin repeatedly stressed in his speeches and articles that the Russian Revolution was only the beginning, the first act of the international, world revolution. (2) The revolution in the West, above all in Germany, though delayed, would necessarily come. Back at a session of the ARCEC on November 4 (17), 1917, Lenin, noting each fact that was evidence of its maturing, had dissociated himself from the Left Socialist-Revolutionary G. D. Zax: "He says no internationalist can use the expression: 'The West is disgracefully silent.' Only the blind fail to see the ferment among the working masses in Germany and the West.... We believe in the revolution in the West. We know that it is inevitable, but it cannot, of course, be made to order." Recalling that it had not been possible to predict the Russian Revolution precisely either, he concluded: "We cannot decree a revolu-

¹ *Minutes of the Central Committee of the RSDLP(B)*, pp. 184-85; *The First Legal Petersburg Committee of Bolsheviks in 1917. A Collection of Materials and Minutes*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1927, p. 386 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "Speeches on War and Peace at a Meeting of the C.C. of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), January 11 (24), 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, p. 467.

tion, but we can help it along. We shall conduct organised fraternisation in the trenches and help the peoples of the West to start an invincible socialist revolution."¹ At the same time, he more and more frequently emphasised the difficulty of starting a revolution in developed countries.² (3) A revolutionary war is a legitimate thing. Lenin said at the Seventh April Party Conference: "We are not pacifists, and we cannot repudiate a revolutionary war.... We must not confine ourselves to theory alone, we must demonstrate in practice that we shall wage a really revolutionary war only when the proletariat is in power."³

Everyone was agreed on those points, but opinions differed sharply on what corresponded most to the interests of the world revolution—defence and consolidation of Soviet power or an attempt to "cause" or "speed up" a revolutionary explosion in, say, Germany by means of immediate revolutionary war (even at the price of losing Soviet power in Russia)?

Lenin considered that success of the revolution was already ensured in Soviet Russia, but time was needed to consolidate victory over the bourgeoisie, to organise the building of socialism and to build an effective army. For that purpose it was not only permissible but absolutely necessary to sign even an annexationist peace. "The international situation in the fourth year of the war," Lenin wrote, "is such that it is quite impossible to predict the probable moment of outbreak of revolution and overthrow of any of the European imperialist governments (including the German). That the socialist revolution in Europe must come, and will come, is beyond doubt. All our hopes for the *final* victory of socialism are founded on this certainty and on this scientific prognosis. Our propaganda activities in general, and the organisation of fraternisation in particular, must be intensified and extended. It would be a mistake, however, to base the tactics of the Russian socialist government on attempts to determine whether or not the European, and especially the German, socialist revolution will take place in the next six months (or some such brief period). Inasmuch as it is quite impossible to determine this, all such attempts, objectively speaking, would be nothing but a blind gamble."⁴

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Meeting of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, November 4 (17), 1917", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 291-92.

² V.I. Lenin, "Speech at the First All-Russia Congress of the Navy, November 22 (December 5), 1917", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 345; *Idem.*, "Speech Delivered at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, December 2 (15), 1917," *op. cit.*, p. 359.

³ V.I. Lenin, "The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 238.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "On the History of the Question of the Unfortunate Peace", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 443-44.

His principled conclusion had it that "the moment a socialist government triumphed in any one country, questions must be decided... exclusively from the point of view of the conditions which best make for the development and consolidation of the socialist revolution which has already begun." Proletarian policy had to be based on the "principle [of] how the socialist revolution can be most firmly and reliably ensured the possibility of consolidating itself, or, at least, of maintaining itself in one country until it is joined by other countries".¹ This stemmed from his prevision in 1915-1917 of the possibility of socialism winning initially in one country.

Lenin's idea of the priority of the internal aspects was immediately and vigorously attacked by the "Left Communists" (N. I. Bukharin, G. I. Oppokov-Lomov, M. S. Uritsky, and others), who accused him of exaggerating the significance of the *national* aspects at the expense of the international.² They assumed that it was the duty of Soviet Russia to wage an immediate *revolutionary war* against German imperialism in the name of the world revolution, in order thereby to help arouse the revolution in Germany and other countries. Otherwise Soviet power, they alleged, would objectively become "an agent of German imperialism". Although at the session of the CC on 11 January the "Left" were forced to recognise that Soviet Russia was then physically unable to wage a revolutionary war, they continued to assert that it was obliged to begin it, even at the cost of its own death.

While resolutely rejecting the accusation concerning the international factor, Lenin at the same time did not agree with Stalin who said in the polemic with the "Left" that "there is no revolutionary movement in the West, no facts, but only a potential, and we cannot count on potentials".³ Although the revolution had not yet begun in the West, Lenin said, there was a mass movement there, and not to count on it would mean to become traitors to international socialism. In replying to the arguments of the "Left", he allowed the possibility where "we must sacrifice ourselves" for success of the German revolution, but the heart of the matter after all was that "the movement there has not yet begun, but over here it already has a newborn and loudly shouting infant, and unless we now say clearly that we agree to peace, we shall perish. It is important for us to hold out until the general socialist revolution gets under way, but this we can only achieve by concluding peace."⁴

¹ V. I. Lenin, "On the History of the Question of the Unfortunate Peace", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 445.

² *Minutes of the Central Committee of the RSDLP(B)*, pp. 169-70.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 170-72.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Speeches on War and Peace at a Meeting of the C.C. of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), January 11 (24), 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, 1971, pp. 469-70.

The root of the mistake of the "Left", as Lenin saw it, was that they were not taking into account the changes in the objective situation. And "the most significant change that has occurred is the foundation of the Russian Soviet Republic". Therefore, "the preservation of the republic that has already begun the socialist revolution is most important to us *and to the international socialist movement*". As for the slogan of a revolutionary war by Russia, at that moment it "would either be an empty phrase and an unsupported demonstration, or would be tantamount, objectively, to falling into the trap set for us by the imperialists."¹

In that connection it also became important how the conclusion of peace would affect the revolutionary movement in the West. A frenzy of chauvinism, Lenin admitted, would probably weaken development of the German revolution, but "Germany's position will remain extremely grave, the war with Britain and America will be a protracted one, and aggressive imperialism will be fully and completely exposed on both sides. A socialist Soviet Republic in Russia will stand as a living example to the peoples of all countries, and the propaganda and revolutionising effect of this example will be immense."² Here, too, Lenin was in the first place reckoning with objective factors of reality. He therefore countered Zinoviev when the latter agreed with the statement by the "Left" that "by concluding peace we shall intensify chauvinism in Germany and weaken the movement everywhere in the West for a time".³

It was exceptionally important, needless to say, to know the opinion of German revolutionaries on this issue. If, Lenin wrote, they suggested "delay concluding a separate peace for a *definite period*, and guaranteed revolutionary action in Germany within this period, the question *might* assume a different aspect for us. Far from saying this, however, the German Lefts formally declare: 'Hold out as long as you can, but decide the question from the point of view of the state of affairs in the *Russian* socialist revolution, for we cannot promise you anything positive regarding the German revolution.'⁴

However, a mass strike started, first in Austro-Hungary, and at the end of January 1918 in Germany, too, and the Workers' Council set up in Berlin issued a demand for "the immediate conclusion of a peace without annexations or indemnities on the basis of self-determination of nations in accordance with the proposals made by the

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Afterword to the Theses on the Question of the Immediate Conclusion of a Separate and Annexationist Peace", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 452.

² V.I. Lenin, "On the History of the Question of the Unfortunate Peace", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 448.

³ *Minutes of the Central Committee of the RSDLP(B)*, p. 171.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "On the History of the Question of the Unfortunate Peace", *op. cit.*, p. 446.

Russian representatives at Brest-Litovsk".¹ At that time Lenin deemed it possible to drag out and delay the negotiations for a while.

The German proletariat's action, however, was quickly suppressed; and there was no hope of a new one in the immediate future. Trotsky, nevertheless, in spite of Lenin's opinion, which he knew, broke off the peace negotiations at Brest on January 28 (February 10). He announced that Russia, while refusing to sign an annexationist treaty, declared the state of war ended, and would order full demobilisation of its troops on the front. This purely propagandist declaration at first caused consternation among the German diplomats, but the military soon took decisive action. On February 18 the German troops passed to the offensive along the whole front, and the situation for the Soviet Republic became critical.

"Lenin was like in a fever," Bonch-Bruyevich, executive secretary of the Council of People's Commissars, recalled. "His tension was immense. He clearly felt that everything was at stake. The slightest delay was enough for Soviet power, still not consolidated, not organised, to be wiped from the face of the earth in an instant. And he put everything aside and directed all his energy to this most important matter."²

In the evening of February 18 Lenin said at a session of the Central Committee: "We cannot afford to wait, which would mean consigning the Russian Revolution to the scrapheap.... There is no half-way in this. If it is to be revolutionary war it must be declared, and the demobilisation stopped, but we can't go on in this manner.... An offer of peace must be made to the Germans."³ For the first time there was a majority for Lenin's view (seven against five with one abstention). The Soviet Government informed Germany that it agreed to sign the peace. But the German troops continued to advance rapidly. On February 22, the Council of People's Commissars published the decree "The Socialist Homeland in Danger!". A state of emergency was declared in Petrograd; mobilisation of working people into the Red Army began, and volunteers went to the front. The next day new, even worse, peace conditions were received. The discussion in the Central Committee again became heated. Lenin was forced to resort to an extreme measure: he announced that if they refused to sign the peace he would resign from the Government and the Central Committee. Seven voted for signing, four against,

¹ R. Müller, *Vom Kaiserreich zur Republik*, Vol. I, Vienna, 1924, p. 204.

² V.D. Bonch-Bruyevich, *On the Battle Positions of the February and October Revolutions*, Moscow, 1930, p. 267 (in Russian).

³ V.I. Lenin, "Speeches at the Evening Sitting of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), February 18, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 522-23.

and four abstained. All supported emergency measures to defend the Republic.¹

Meanwhile the German troops continued their advance. They were already approaching Pskov. Red Guards and detachments of the Red Army were hurriedly transferred to the area and put up strong resistance. February 23, the day of the first rebuff to the invasion, was subsequently declared Red Army Day.

On March 3 the peace treaty with Germany was signed. But the struggle in the Party continued, at meetings, in the press, and at the Seventh Extraordinary Congress of the RCP(B). The Left Socialist-Revolutionaries in the Government and the ARCEC fought for a revolutionary war. The Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries opposed Soviet power with full fury. Among the "Left Communists" opposing Lenin there were, as Nadezhda Krupskaya later recalled, "quite a number of intimate comrades with whom Ilyich had been working hand in hand for years and whom he had been accustomed to look to for support during critical moments of the struggle."² They included Dzerzhinski, Yaroslavsky, Kuibyshev, Pokrovsky and others who would not reckon even with the fact that the counter-revolution in alliance with the Entente had mobilised immense forces in order to push Russia into continuing the imperialist war. In that way the enemies of the Revolution planned to overthrow the Bolsheviks.

Lenin continued to fight with immense energy against revolutionary phrase-mongering, in which he saw an expression of petty-bourgeois tendencies and which could destroy the revolution. "The week from February 18 to 24, 1918," he wrote, "has been one that will be remembered as a great turning-point in the history of the Russian—and international—revolution", because it was "a bitter, distressing, painful, but necessary, useful and beneficial lesson." Three conclusions followed from it: (1) "We are and have been defencists since October 25, 1917, we champion the defence of the fatherland ever since that day.... We are in favour of defending the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic"; (2) "we demand a *serious* attitude towards the country's defence potential and preparedness for war"; and (3) the maturing revolution in Europe "*must* be helped. We have to *know how* to help it. It would harm and not help that growing strength if we were to give up the neighbouring Soviet Socialist Republic". Therefore, the great slogan "We bank on the victory of socialism in Europe" should not be turned into a mere phrase. "It is a true slogan if we have in mind the long and difficult path to the full victory of socialism. It is an indisputable philosophic-historical truth in respect

¹ *Minutes of the Central Committee of the RSDLP(B)*, pp. 213-15.

² N.K. Krupskaya, *Reminiscences of Lenin*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 446-47.

of the entire 'era of the socialist revolution'. But any abstract truth becomes an empty phrase if it is applied to *any* concrete situation."¹

Shortly afterwards, Lenin elaborated on what it really meant to help the revolution in Europe. Ridiculing the idea that the Soviet Republic should not sign treaties at all with imperialists (in which case "it could not exist at all, without flying to the moon"), and refuting the "theory of giving the revolution a push" (which "would be completely at variance with Marxism"), he formulated a most important principle of international aid: "Actually,... the interests of the world revolution demand that Soviet power, having overthrown the bourgeoisie in our country, should *help* that revolution, but that it should choose a *form* of help which is commensurate with its own strength."² Military aid and a readiness to make sacrifices, even the possibility of defeat, were by no means ruled out. But one thing was clear: "War must be waged in earnest, or not waged at all. There is no middle course."³

While stressing the heavy burden of the peace terms imposed by the German imperialists, the loss of vast areas and the payment of indemnities, Lenin did not agree that it was either a shameful or an "obscene" peace. As for its final terms being "worse, more onerous and humiliating than the bad, onerous and humiliating Brest terms", he pointed out, "it is *our pseudo-Lefts*, Bukharin, Lomov, Uritsky and Co., who *are to blame for this* happening to the Great-Russian Soviet Republic."⁴ Trotsky, too, was among those guilty.

In view of the importance of the issue of war and peace, and the acute inner-party disagreements, a Seventh Extraordinary Congress of the Party was convened on 6-8 March 1918. As a result of the explanatory work during its preparation and a cooler reasoning, a majority of the Party organisations came to Lenin's position. The report of the Central Committee, made by Lenin, was largely devoted to justifying the line of a peaceful breathing space. "The greatest difficulty of the Russian Revolution, its greatest historical problem," he said, was "the need to solve international problems." The slow maturing of the revolution in Europe, the fact that it was "late in coming", made it necessary to retreat, manoeuvre, and gain a breathing space. It was impossible to bank on the "international field revolution" (an expression of one of the "Left", N. Osinsky), it was necessary to abandon illusions, and to work persistently for

¹ V.I. Lenin, "A Painful but Necessary Lesson", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 62-65.

² V.I. Lenin, "Strange and Monstrous", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 71, 72.

³ V.I. Lenin, "On a Business-like Basis", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 76.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "A Serious Lesson and a Serious Responsibility", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 82.

victory despite the defeat.¹ Bukharin's co-report, and the speeches of other "Left Communists", developed the idea that peace meant "capitulation along the whole front", that the Russian Revolution would "either be saved by the international revolution or succumb to the blows of international capital". There was nothing new, except panic, in these loud phrases, and Lenin noted only a telling point made by D. B. Ryazanov: "Lenin was surrendering space to gain time." That was the essence, he remarked, all the rest was just talk. The resolution moved by Lenin was passed on a roll-call vote by 30 votes against 12 with four abstentions.²

On March 14-16, 1918, the Fourth All-Russia Extraordinary Congress of Soviets met in Moscow (made the capital of the Republic, where the Soviet Government had just moved from Petrograd). The issue of ratifying the peace treaty was the subject of a sharp debate at the Congress. Of the 1,232 delegates 795 were Bolsheviks, 283 Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, 25 Centre Socialist-Revolutionaries, 21 Mensheviks, and 11 Internationalist Mensheviks. The Left Socialist-Revolutionaries announced their refusal to support the treaty, and their representatives resigned from the Government. Martov claimed it was a matter of "a first partition of Russia and a sell-out of the Russian Revolution to German imperialism". In spite of all attempts to block ratification, however, an absolute majority voted in favour. A peaceful breathing space was gained.

THE PLAN FOR BUILDING SOCIALISM

The national economy that the Soviet Republic inherited was multi-structural. It incorporated private ownership capitalism, state capitalism, and small commodity and also patriarchal, to a high degree subsistence, economy. Small-commodity, peasant production predominated. That diversity of economic structures called for circumspection in defining the schedules, rates and methods of socialist transformations and in evolving the forms and methods of managing the national economy.

Lenin developed a comprehensive plan for the further socialist construction in a situation when the working class and the Soviet state already held a number of key positions in the economy (the banks, part of the major industries, etc.). He made this plan public in the spring of 1918 in the pamphlet *The Immediate Tasks of the So-*

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 6-8, 1918. Political Report of the Central Committee, March 7", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 92, 101-102, 106, 108-109.

² *Seventh Extraordinary Congress of the RCP(B). March 1918. Verbatim Report*, Moscow, 1962, pp. 24, 32, 127 (in Russian).

viet Government, in a report, carrying the same title, to a session of the ARCEC and in other statements. A "Red Guard attack on capital," he pointed out, was a thing of the past. The new conditions required a different approach. "We achieved victory with the aid of light cavalry, but we also have heavy artillery. We achieved victory by methods of suppression, we shall be able to achieve victory also by methods of administration. We must know how to change our methods of fighting the enemy to suit changes in the situation."¹

The main thing now was organisation of accounting and supervision of production and distribution on a national scale, curbing the spontaneous petty-bourgeois elements by channelling private capitalism into state capitalism development, and a gradual expansion of the socialist sector in the economy. Lenin later wrote of this plan: "We assumed that the two systems—state production and distribution and private commodity production and distribution—would compete with each other, and meanwhile we would build up state production and distribution, and step by step win them away from the hostile system. We said that our task now was not so much to expropriate the expropriators as to introduce accounting and control, increase the productivity of labour and tighten up discipline."²

Lenin linked the economic tasks and accounting and control on a national scale with consolidation of the monetary system; he considered that a state grain monopoly, public control over private entrepreneurs, the use of bourgeois co-operation by the proletarian state, etc., would help switch private enterprise capitalism into the channel of state capitalism. He also outlined ways of laying the material and technological foundations of socialism, viz., a rise in all industries (engineering, chemicals, power), stressing that the concrete forms of the transition to a large-scale economy based on machine industry would inevitably be varied.

At the same time the People's Commissariat of Education on Lenin's initiative negotiated with the Academy of Sciences, which said it was willing to undertake an exploration of the country's natural resources to help proper distribution of industry and the most rational use of productive forces. Lenin's *Draft Plan of Scientific and Technical Work* carried the first ever outline of the main tasks in the economic development of the whole country. It was a matter above all of the possibility for the country "to provide itself *independently* with *all* the chief items of raw materials and organise main branches of industry", of the necessity to pay special attention

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 247.

² V.I. Lenin, "Seventh Moscow Gubernia Conference of the Russian Communist Party, October 29-31, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 88.

to "the electrification of industry and transport and application of electricity in farming". A careful attitude to natural resources was recommended, with "the use of lower grades of fuel (peat, low-grade coal) for the production of electricity, with the lowest possible expenditure on extraction and transport", and also the use of hydropower resources and windmills.¹

Lenin had to defend the gradual character of socialist reforms in polemics against the "Left Communists" (N. I. Bukharin, V. V. Obolensky-Osinsky and others). Ignoring the country's socio-economic level they opposed the use of state capitalism, and called for almost immediate introduction of socialism, elimination of the capitalists as a class, and a communistic organisation of production and distribution. In the article "*Left-wing*" *Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality* Lenin pointed out that these critics did not understand "what kind of *transition* it is from capitalism to socialism that gives us the right and the grounds to call our country the Socialist Republic of Soviets". They did not recognise "the petty-bourgeois element as the *principal* enemy of socialism", and overlooked the main point, that "*economically*, state capitalism is immeasurably superior to our present economic system" and was not at all dangerous to the Soviet state.²

By the summer of 1918 the working class had accumulated some experience of managing the economy, and economic agencies of proletarian rule had been established everywhere. This made it possible to proceed to nationalise the sugar, oil, engineering and other major industries. On June 28, 1918 the CPC decreed the transfer of big enterprises and of some medium-sized ones in all the basic industries to the Soviet Republic.³ The decree was hastened by German claims to "German property" in Russia. But the agencies of the Supreme Economic Council could not immediately take charge of the large number of enterprises that came under the decree provisions (more than 2,000). Nationalisation was therefore in fact carried out as works' managements and agencies to administer whole groups of enterprises were set up. Until then plants were considered to be "at the rent-free use of the former owners". By the spring of 1919 almost the entire large-scale industry had become public property. Socialist organisation of production became the leading form of the Soviet Republic's economy.

But however important nationalisation of the means of production was, it was not the sole problem or the most difficult one, that had to be decided for the transition to socialism. The main thing was to

¹ V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 320-21.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 335, 339.

³ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1959, pp. 498-503 (in Russian).

learn how to manage efficiently all that the working class had taken over, to learn to run the economy, without which there was no socialisation in fact. To do that all the experience accumulated by the capitalist class had to be studied and taken into the armoury. As Lenin said, replying to the anarchist A. Y. Ghe and to Bukharin at a session of the ARCEC, "The only socialism we can imagine is one based on all the lessons learned through large-scale capitalist culture."¹ It was necessary to master the modern science and technology, and to learn how to organise production from the capitalists of the advanced countries of Europe and America. Lenin had in mind, in particular, piece-work system of pay and the Taylor system, and even put it this way in one of his drafts: "To draw the best from abroad with both hands: Soviet power + Prussian railway order + + American technology and organisation of trusts + American public education, etc., etc. + + = Σ = socialism."²

In order to cope with this task it was necessary to draw the available specialists into co-operation in production and culture. The attitude to "bourgeois specialists" proved to be a most acute problem in that period. It was a vital component of the broader issue of the proletarian government's relations with bourgeois intelligentsia. Back in 1902 Lenin had written: "Like any other class in modern society, the proletariat is not only advancing intellectuals from its own midst, but also accepts into its ranks supporters from the midst of all and sundry educated people."³

The building of socialism not only implied a rise in the political consciousness of the broad masses, but also the development of public education, science and the arts on a hitherto unprecedented scale, in short, the carrying out of a cultural revolution.

In this endeavour the working class also had an acute need for the knowledge and experience of the intelligentsia and experts in various spheres of science, technology, the arts and administration. In the conditions of the socialist revolution in Russia, however, it proved an extremely difficult business to attract bourgeois intellectuals and employees to creative, constructive activity. In late 1917 and early 1918 the Soviet authorities repeatedly encountered mass sabotage by medical workers, teachers, university faculty, civil servants, employees of the supply services and a considerable part of the technical intelligentsia.

The People's Commissar of Education A. V. Lunacharsky, calling on all genuinely democratic forces to co-operate, wrote in an appeal

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Session of the All-Russia C.E.C., April 29, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 310.

² V.I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, 5th Russian Edition, Vol. 36, p. 550.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Revolutionary Adventurism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, Moscow, 1974, p. 196.

of October 29 (November 11), 1917: "We believe that the concerted efforts of the working people and the honest, enlightened intelligentsia will pull the country out of the painful crisis and with the help of lawful people's power lead it to the reign of socialism and brotherhood of nations."¹

White collar workers who had a social position close to the proletariat came over immediately, as a rule, to its side. The rule, of course, was not universal. General Baron von Taube commanded the Soviet troops in Siberia and died in Kolchak's dungeon, while General Kornilov, son of an army clerk and an illiterate Kazakh woman, headed the counter-revolutionary forces. The poet Alexander Blok called on intellectuals "to harken to the Revolution with all their body, heart and mind", while Ivan Bunin, a well-known writer, cursed "the planetary villain" in a whiteguard newspaper.

Those who from the outset took the side of the Revolution included eminent scientists and engineers, such as Professors K. A. Timiryazev and N. E. Zhukovsky, the father of space rocketry K. E. Tsiolkovsky, Academicians A. N. Krylov and A. P. Karpinsky, A. N. Bach, V. I. Bekhterev, R. E. Klasson and many others. They also included the poets Alexander Blok, Valery Bryusov and Vladimir Mayakovsky, and such outstanding theatre figures as Konstantin Stanislavsky, Yevgeny Vakhtangov, Vsevolod Meyerhold, Leonid Sobinov and Maria Yermolova, to mention just a few.

But it took many members of the old intelligentsia time before they realised that the socialist revolution opened up prodigious vistas for all-round development of the individual and growth of material prosperity and culture. The Soviet Government's constructive plans, the immense enthusiasm with which the working class tackled them, and its thirst for knowledge and culture, forbidden fare theretofore, helped attract the intellectuals in no small way.

Lunacharsky put in a great deal of work to draw intellectuals over to the Soviet side. The seething, enthusiastic activity of this talented and versatile connoisseur of literature and the arts, his efforts in organising education, his articles and speeches, produced an indelible impression. The great proletarian writer Maxim Gorky, who enjoyed a reputation in very broad social circles, overcame his initial wavering and rendered great help. In September 1918 he came to Moscow from Petrograd and had a long talk with Lenin. Gorky reported the latter's words as follows: "An alliance of the workers and the intelligentsia, eh? That's not bad, no. Tell the intelligentsia, let them come over to us. According to you they sincerely serve the interests of justice, don't they? What's the matter then? Come to

¹ *Collection of Statutes and Instructions of the Workers' and Peasants' Government. October 25, 1917 to January 5, 1918, Moscow, 1918, p. 17 (in Russian).*

us. It is we who have taken on the colossal job of raising the people to their feet and telling the world the whole truth about life. We are showing the people the direct road to a human life, the road from slavery, poverty, and abjection.... How can I dispute that we need the intelligentsia? But you see yourself how hostile their mood is, how poorly they understand the needs of the moment. And they don't see that they are powerless without us, they will not reach the masses. It will be their fault if we break too many pots."¹

The Bolsheviks considered it necessary to employ material incentives as well as moral stimuli in order to draw intellectuals to the side of the Soviets. Although wage ceilings had been introduced in the country, higher payments were fixed for the experts, and special "academic" rations were established. Lenin called this "tribute" for cultural backwardness, or "paying stars". He admitted that it meant compromising, "a departure from the principles of the Paris Commune", and that it could have an adverse effect both on the Soviet system and the working masses.² But it was a measure dictated by necessity.

In the spring of 1918, specialists, managerial staff and other groups of intellectuals, convinced of the strength and truly popular character of the Soviets, and attracted by their constructive plans, were already turning gradually toward co-operation. By the autumn civil servants and employees of pre-revolutionary governmental, public and private institutions were a considerable proportion in the Soviet administrative machinery, up to 50 per cent in some People's Commissariats. Life refuted the pessimistic forecasts of the bourgeois prophets: the working class, advancing leaders from its midst and attracting bourgeois specialists, was able to master public administration. Lenin later said that "only workers' participation in the general administration of the state has enabled us to hold out amidst such incredible difficulties", and "only by following this path shall we achieve complete victory".³

Factory boards were set up to guide the activity of nationalised enterprises, two-thirds of their members appointed by local economic councils and the Supreme Economic Council, and one-third elected by the workers. The worker I. F. Rakov, elected the first director of the Proletarka Mills in Ostashkov, recalled: "It was extremely difficult for me to guide such a big enterprise as Proletarka, not having sufficient knowledge or experience. There was no fuel, no raw materials, the equipment was worn out, the workers starving, getting just two ounces of bread, and that with chaff

¹ Maxim Gorky, *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, Moscow, 1952, p. 31 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 249-51.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Two Years of Soviet Rule", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 129.

mixed in. At the same time, paradoxical as it seems, it was easy to work—because the workers warmly and actively supported the leadership in all the endeavours of the enterprise. They gave any help, threw themselves into any job with enthusiasm, and were themselves the initiators of many things.”¹ Later Lenin said: “We consider it most important and valuable that the workers have themselves tackled the job, and that we have passed from workers’ control ... to workers’ industrial administration on a national scale.”²

The business of raising labour productivity was especially difficult in those conditions. In order to do so it was necessary to restore the economy, to organise the extraction of natural wealth, develop large-scale industry, introduce the up-to-date technology, and to achieve a growth in the educational and cultural level of the population, and to develop new principles of conscious labour discipline. In a plan for his article *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, Lenin described this as “protracted work”. In late 1917, thinking over the ways of tackling this problem, he wrote in the article, then unpublished, *How to Organise Competition?* that capitalist competition aims at a crust of bread and influence, but degenerates into suppression of “the enterprise, energy, and bold initiative of the mass of the population”. In spite of capitalist inventions, “far from extinguishing competition, socialism, on the contrary, for the first time creates the opportunity for employing it on a really *wide* and on a really *mass* scale, for actually drawing the majority of working people into a field of labour in which they can display their abilities, develop their capacities, and reveal those talents, so abundant among the people, which capitalism crushed, suppressed and strangled in thousands and millions.”

Of course, he continued, we have to remember that the workers and peasants, whom hunger and want have forced to work all their lives under the stick, are still shy, have not yet got used to the fact that now they were the *dominant* class. It would take time to foster their full sense of independence and resolve. “But the Revolution of October 1917 is strong, viable and invincible because it *awakens* these qualities, breaks down the old impediments, removes the worn-out shackles, and leads the working people on to the road of the *independent* creation of a new life.”³ It was necessary to organise competition, Lenin wrote, “for steady improvement of organisation, disci-

¹ I.F. Rakov, “From Workers’ Control to the Management of Factories”, *Following Lenin’s Course. Reminiscences of Old Bolsheviks*, Moscow, 1972, pp. 223-24 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, “Extraordinary Sixth All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers’, Peasants’, Cossacks’ and Red Army Deputies, November 6-9, 1918”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, 1977, pp. 139-40.

³ V.I. Lenin, “How to Organise Competition?”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 404, 409-410.

pline and labour productivity, for transition to superior techniques, for economising labour and materials, for gradually reducing the working day to six hours."¹

In the spring of 1918 Lenin disclosed and analysed two integrally linked aspects of democracy in the transition period from capitalism to socialism. On the one hand, it was necessary to develop the enthusiasm of the masses in every way, the independent initiative and the consciousness and voluntary character of the activities of the working people, and not to stifle the welling up "public meeting democracy". On the other hand, in order to organise production, it was necessary to have labour discipline and one-man management, i.e. certain forms of compulsion in the form of *implicit obedience* of the masses to the *single will* of the directors of the labour process, to combine collective management with the personal responsibility of each for his job. It was quite difficult to clearly delimit and at the same time combine these "two categories of democratic functions", both organisationally, ideologically, and psychologically.²

In that connection Lenin also discussed how to realise the immense advantage of Soviet government, i.e. its unprecedented democratism, and at the same time to eliminate everything within this very new political system that contradicted this highest type of democracy. "Nothing could be sillier," he wrote, "than to transform the Soviets into something congealed and selfcontained. The more resolutely we now have to stand for a ruthlessly firm government, for the dictatorship of individuals *in definite processes of work*, in definite aspects of *purely executive* functions, the more varied must be the forms and methods of control from below in order to counteract every shadow of a possibility of distorting the principles of Soviet government, in order repeatedly and tirelessly to weed out bureaucracy."³ Lenin spoke many times of the danger of bureaucratic distortions. At a session of the Petrograd Soviet, replying to a note that much "mouldiness, moss and red tape... has grown in the localities", he said: "That is perfectly true.... We threw out the old bureaucrats, but they have come back.... What to do about it? We must fight this scum again and again, and if the scum has crawled back we must again and again clear it up, chase it out, keep it under the surveillance."⁴

He explained the development of red tape not simply by survivals of the old but also by the low cultural standards of the masses of the

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 157.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", *op. cit.*, pp. 211, 269, 271.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Session of the Petrograd Soviet, March 12, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 32-33.

people. "We are not utopians who think that socialist Russia must be built up by men of a new type; we must utilise the material we have inherited from the old capitalist world."¹ Willy-nilly, socialism would have to be built" with the aid of those men and women who grew up under capitalism, were depraved and corrupted by capitalism", but, on the other hand, "stepped for the struggle by capitalism", and not "with the people reared in hothouses".²

Lenin and the Bolshevik Party saw the way out of the existing situation in drawing into the building of socialism both proletarians previously deprived of culture and able only gradually to make up for what they had missed, and brain workers who consciously wanted to take part in building the new system or were ready, for one reason or another, to serve the Soviet government.

AGGRAVATION OF CIVIL WAR

Gigantic constructive work was begun, but more and more obstacles piled up in the way of the Soviet Government's endeavours in the economic, political and cultural fields. The first was famine, and the second—the growing activity of counter-revolutionary forces.

From the very beginning the worker-peasant government was faced acutely with the food problem it had inherited from the former rulers. Their way of running things had reduced the country to famine. The food problem was aggravated by the disorganisation of transport, especially in the big towns. The peasant poor, the support of Soviet rule in the countryside, themselves had no bread and were starving. The rural rich, the kulaks, had grain, but they refused to sell it to the Soviet state at stable prices, counting on throttling the Revolution by hunger.

In the spring of 1918, workers in industrial centres were supplied no food for weeks. At the beginning of May the population of Petrograd was issued the last of rusks. Food had become the main issue of the Revolution. Emergency measures were needed to save the country, and above all the working class. Decrees of the ARCEC and the CPC established a "food dictatorship" of the proletarian state. Its aim was to centralise the procurement and distribution of food, provide a government grain monopoly, ban private dealing in grain, and ensure delivery of surplus grain to the government at stable prices. These resolute revolutionary measures could be carried out only by the working class.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Achievements and Difficulties of the Soviet Government", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 69-70.

The Soviet Government passed a decision on worker involvement in the fight against famine. The Commissariat of Labour and the trade unions were asked "to mobilise the greatest possible number of public-spirited, organised and class-conscious workers to help the rural poor in their struggle against the rich kulaks and to mercilessly suppress profiteering in grain and attempts to infringe the grain monopoly".¹

There was famine, Lenin wrote on May 22 to Petrograd workers, not because there was no grain in Russia but because "the bourgeoisie and the rich generally are putting up a last decisive fight against the rule of the toilers, against the state of the workers, against Soviet power, on this most important and acute of issues, the issue of bread". The workers should launch a *crusade* against the grain profiteers, kulaks, vultures and those feeding on disorganisation and bribery. "The country and the revolution can be saved only by the mass effort of the advanced workers. We need tens of thousands of advanced and steeled proletarians, class-conscious enough to explain matters to the millions of the poor peasants all over the country and to assume the leadership of these millions, resolute enough to ruthlessly cast out of their midst and shoot all who allow themselves to be 'tempted'—as indeed happens—by the temptations of profiteering and turn from fighters for the cause of the people into robbers; we need proletarians steadfast enough and devoted enough to the revolution to bear in an organised way all the hardships of the *crusade* and take it to every corner of the country for the establishment of order, for the consolidation of the local organs of Soviet power, and for the exercise of control in the localities over every pood of grain and every pood of fuel." Only victory over famine and unemployment could help the revolution develop to "the real prelude to socialism".²

Formation of food procurement units began at major enterprises. The unit formed at the Putilov Works in Petrograd in August 1918 was led by the Communist boilermaker N. B. Borisov, his deputy was the milling-machine operator N. O. Savitsky and the treasurer was E. N. Surkov, an engine-driver who had taken part in the storming of the Winter Palace. The squad numbered 389 skilled workers, its core consisting of 79 Communists and *sympathisers* (the term that designated those supporting the Party's platform and taking part in its actions). Scores of such units consisting mainly of workers were formed in Petrograd. Thousands of workers went to the villages from Moscow, Ivanovo-Voznesensk and other cities. Around 80,000 people had taken part in this mass proletarian crusade by the end of 1918.

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Mobilisation of the Workers to Combat Famine", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, 1969, p. 93.

² V.I. Lenin, "On the Famine", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 391, 396, 398.

The members of the food units began their work by explaining the situation to the labouring peasants. A. E. Badayev, once himself a skilled worker, the leader of a combined unit of 2,000 Petrograd workers sent to the Northern Region, recalled that "workers who had just left their machine-tools, became regular orators and made reports on the most varied themes".¹ The workers told the peasants about the Bolsheviks' policy and distributed appeals and newspapers. Relying on the rural poor they confiscated grain from kulaks who were sabotaging the Soviet food policy.

The Committees of the Poor set up in the summer as agencies for rallying the poorest peasants played a big role in this fight against the rural bourgeoisie. The workers of industrial centres who were sent to rural areas in food units or as agitators took an active part in the organisation and work of these committees, which registered grain surpluses, forced the kulaks to disclose caches of food, confiscated their grain, and fought profiteers. The poor, having received land, often could not work it because they had no seed, draught animals or farm implements. Their committees concerned themselves with transferring some of the cattle and implements taken from kulak saboteurs to the needy. The activity of the committees and the food units broke the kulak's economic and political position in the countryside. At the same time the committees increased the middle peasants' confidence in the working class by drawing them into their work and helping them. After the committees had done their main job they were dissolved in the autumn of 1918 and merged with the local Soviets.

The immediate aim of all political, administrative and socio-economic measures taken by the Soviet Government in rural areas was to cope with such urgent practical matters as the food and agrarian problems. But they were ultimately directed to tackling a strategic task, that of consolidating the alliance of the working class and the mass of labouring peasants, above all the poor. That was a most important condition for consolidating Soviet rule and for its invincibility in the war with the internal and international reaction that had taken up arms against it.

The tasks being carried out in the countryside were of a bourgeois-democratic character, but the Communist Party constantly had a perspective of socialist reform in mind. The abolition of private ownership of land itself gave the proletarian state "the maximum opportunity of passing to socialism in agriculture".² Soviet agrarian laws granted collective farms (artels, communes) the right to preference

¹ A.E. Badayev, *Ten Years of Fighting and Building*, Leningrad, 1927, pp. 50-51 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 316.

over individual farms in the use of land and priority supply of implements, seed and funds.

While demonstrating the historical need for a socialist transformation of agriculture, Lenin stressed that it was an extremely difficult business that had to be tackled gradually, without coercion, in no way racing ahead of the masses' development but rather by persuading the peasants by force of example.¹ Since the peasants in the mass did not at first understand the advantages of joint working of the land, and were not convinced of the advantageousness of collective farms, the Party did not push setting them up. Their organisers were often industrial workers who were back on the land for one reason or another. Not all the joint farms set up at that time were able to survive the host of difficulties, but the very fact of their emergence was of great significance for the subsequent development of the village.

Replying to the allegations that the Bolsheviks used coercive measures to "introduce socialism" in rural areas, Lenin pointed out that the proletariat of Russia jointly with the peasantry had carried out mainly a *bourgeois-democratic revolution* in the village. It had been an all-peasant, general democratic struggle. Only in the summer and autumn of 1918, when the poor rose up, when the tens of millions of rural proletarians and semi-proletarians united with the working class in the fight against the kulaks and the bourgeoisie, did the proletarian revolution embrace the countryside as well.²

"If," Lenin wrote, "the Bolshevik proletariat had tried at once, in October-November 1917, without waiting for the class differentiation in the rural districts, without being able to *prepare* it and bring it about, to 'decree' a civil war or the 'introduction of socialism' in the rural districts, ... that would then have been ... an attempt by the *minority* to impose its will on the majority; it would have been a theoretical absurdity, revealing a failure to understand that a general peasant revolution is *still* a bourgeois revolution, and that without a *series of transitions, of transitional stages*, it cannot be transformed into a socialist revolution in a backward country."³

The sharpening of the class struggle in the village and other complexities arising in Soviet Russia's internal affairs, were compounded by activation of its external enemies. On March 15, 1918, the same day that the Congress of Soviets in Moscow ratified the Treaty

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Speech to the First All-Russia Congress of Land Departments, Poor Peasants' Committees and Communes. December 11, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 347.

² V.I. Lenin, "Extraordinary Sixth All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants', Cossacks' and Red Army Deputies", *op. cit.*, pp. 141-43.

³ V.I. Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *op. cit.*, p. 304.

of Brest, a conference of the prime ministers and ministers of foreign affairs of Britain, France and Italy assembled in London decided not to recognise this treaty and immediately to begin an invasion of Russia by Allied troops. In an official communication sent to the US Administration, the British Foreign Secretary Balfour wrote: "To the Conference it seemed that [no remedy] is possible except through Allied intervention."¹ Actually, that was only confirmation and a continuation of actions not only agreed before but already begun and amounting to gross interference by the imperialists in the Soviet Republic's home affairs. Back in December 1917 a decision in principle had been taken at a conference of the Entente Powers in Paris on armed intervention in Russia. At that time, too, Britain and France concluded a convention "regulating the future operations of British and French forces on Russian territory".² Negotiations were held on US and Japanese participation in the intervention.

The war with Germany prevented immediate implementation of these plans, and, besides, the appropriate preparations also took time. But the Entente imperialists were not inactive: they established an economic blockade of the Soviet Republic, supplied its enemies with arms and funds through their agents, embassies and missions, gave every kind of support to the anti-Soviet forces and incited civil war in the country. At the beginning of March 1918 the British cruiser *HMS Glory* landed the first expeditionary force at Murmansk, then French troops arrived on the cruiser *Amiral Aube* and American troops on the cruiser *Olympia*. On April 5, Japanese troops landed in Vladivostok, followed by British troops. An open military intervention of Entente Powers began.

Relations between Soviet Russia and Germany also began to deteriorate. After occupying the Ukraine, where they put their man Hetman Skoropadsky in power, Germans entered the Crimea and tried to seize the Soviet Black Sea Fleet. By order of the Soviet Government the ships were withdrawn to Novorossiisk and, so as not to fall into the enemy's hands, were scuttled. German troops invaded the Don Region and on May 8, together with white Cossacks, took Rostov-on-Don. General P. N. Krasnov, leader of the abortive Kerensky-Krasnov mutiny back in late 1917, released on parole, on his word of honour that he would not take arms against the Soviet government, was now elected ataman of the Don Force. The North Caucasus was cut off from Central Russia, and German troops threatened Transcaucasia.

At the end of May 1918 an anti-Soviet mutiny broke out of the Czechoslovak Corps located in Russia. It had been formed in the years

¹ David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, Vol. VI, London, 1936, pp. 3175-3176.

² W.H. Chamberlain, *The Russian Revolution 1917-1921*, Vol. II, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1954, p. 153.

of the World War from ethnic Czech and Slovak POWs from the Austro-Hungarian army. The Corps (35,000 to 40,000 men) was on its way to the Far East so as to be transferred from there to France in order to take part in the war against Germany. The mutiny of the Corps, whose trains were stretched out along the railway from the Volga to Siberia, was incited by agents of France, Britain and the USA. The Czechoslovak soldiers were drawn into an anti-Soviet war by deceit, told that the Soviet Government wanted to extradite them to Austro-Hungary. Not all of them, however, fell for anti-Soviet propaganda: around 4,000 internationalists fought on the side of the Red Army.¹

The mutiny of the Czechoslovak Corps became a pretext for the Supreme War Council of the Entente to "gain control over Siberia" and for President Wilson to order American troops to "hold possession of Vladivostok".² It was also a signal for armed uprisings of the internal counter-revolution: kulak-whiteguard insurrections began in the left-bank Volga Area, and the Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks plotted mutinies in many towns in Central Russia.

In May the Party Council of the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries decided on an uprising against the Soviet Government. In a letter to the American and French ambassadors, a veteran Socialist-Revolutionary E. K. Breshko-Breshkovskaya called on them to "help Russia free itself from Bolshevik power". The Menshevik Party, which still had 60,000 members (not counting Georgia), issued the slogan "Skip the Soviets". Since these parties were not only carrying on frenzied anti-Soviet agitation but were also taking the road of armed struggle against the Soviet Government, the ARCEC decided on June 14, 1918 to expel them from the Executive Committee and the Soviets.³

Relations between the Bolsheviks and Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, who had resigned from the Soviet Government in the spring in protest against the Treaty of Brest but had remained in the ARCEC and Soviets, were complicated. When the class struggle in the village sharpened and the Soviet Government was forced to establish the food dictatorship, set up Committees of the Poor, and take resolute measures against the kulaks, the leadership of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries decided at their congress to "rectify the line of Soviet policy". That meant a line of breaking the peace treaty with Germany and organising an armed insurrection against the Soviet Government.

¹ *The Internationalists*, p. 306; A.Kh. Klevansky, *Czechoslovak Internationalists and the Sold-Out Corps*, Moscow, 1965 (in Russian).

² *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States. 1918. Russia*, Vol. II, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1932, pp. 242, 263.

³ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. II, pp. 430-31.

The 5th All-Russia Congress of Soviets opened in Moscow on July 4, 1918. Its party composition reflected the wavering of the petty bourgeoisie. Compared with the preceding congress, held in March, the small parties, including the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, were practically unrepresented (2 per cent of the mandates against the earlier 8 per cent). The ratio of Communist delegates and Left Socialist-Revolutionaries altered in favour of the latter, and had become 66 and 30 per cent instead of 70 and 20. The number of votes cast for Left Socialist-Revolutionaries had mainly risen in the rich agricultural areas.

Their group in the congress took the offensive. Its leader M. A. Spiridonova, after open threats to use terror against the Soviet Government, expressed no confidence in it. Having no support of the majority, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries passed to provocative actions. On July 6 (in accordance with a decision of their Central Committee), the German Ambassador Count Mirbach was assassinated. Felix Dzerzhinsky, chairman of the All-Russia Extraordinary Commission, himself went to the headquarters of D. I. Popov's squad to demand surrender of the murderer and was detained there. His deputy M. J. Lacis was also arrested, and so was P. G. Smidovich, chairman of the Moscow Soviet, and another 27 Communists. On the night of July 6, the mutineers, who had at least 1,800 armed men, occupied the Central Telegraph Office, and the former People's Commissar of Post and Telegraph, P. P. Proshyan telegraphed across the country that the Bolsheviks were overthrown. But the army units and the population did not support the mutiny. The vigorous measures were taken on Lenin's direct instructions (operations led by N. I. Podvoisky) and on July 8 Soviet troops and worker fighting squads already defeated the mutineers. The adventurist attempt to cause war with Germany, which threatened disaster for the Soviet Government, was frustrated. The mutiny in Simbirsk, raised by the Commander of the Eastern Front, the Left Socialist-Revolutionary M. A. Muravyov, was also quickly suppressed. But the White Czechs took advantage of the events and occupied Simbirsk and Ekaterinburg.

The Left Socialist-Revolutionaries' mutiny interrupted the work of the Congress of Soviets for only three days. On resuming its sessions it approved the vigorous actions to liquidate the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries' adventure. Their organisations that had supported the mutiny could not, the congress declared, have any place in the Soviets.¹

¹ *Congresses of Soviets of the RSFSR and the Autonomous Republics of the RSFSR. A Collection of Documents. 1917-1922, Vol. I, Moscow, 1959, pp. 64-65 (in Russian).*

In condemning Left S-R leaders who had become accomplices of the whiteguards, Lenin analysed the sources of the vacillations of the spokesmen of Populist (*Narodnik*-type), petty-bourgeois socialism. Above all, he drew attention to the exceptionally difficult circumstance that the Soviet Government, in signing the harsh Treaty of Brest, had had "to go against patriotism". That had alienated broad petty-bourgeois circles from it. "Patriotism", he wrote, "is one of the most deeply ingrained sentiments", consolidated "by the existence of separate fatherlands for hundreds and thousands of years." One could therefore understand the anger, bitterness and indignation caused by the treaty. Only the proletarian vanguard was able to realise that very great national sacrifices had to be borne "for the sake of the supreme interests of the world proletarian revolution". Petty-bourgeois sections of the population and their ideologists could not comprehend this policy, the more so that it seemed to sacrifice "the real and most obvious interests of hundreds of millions for the sake of an abstract, utopian and dubious hope of something that might occur abroad".¹ But life confirmed the correctness of the Bolsheviks' calculations.

Lenin showed that the Bolsheviks' policy in the rural areas, which had provoked the resignation of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, had not narrowed the circle of those who supported the Communists. On the contrary, "at that very time the *real* circle of supporters of Bolshevism was *expanding enormously*, because scores and scores of millions of the village poor were freeing themselves from the tutelage and influence of the kulaks and village bourgeoisie and were awakening to *independent* political life." Therefore, he concluded, "we have lost hundreds of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, spineless intellectuals and kulaks from among the peasants; but we have gained millions of poor people."²

The Left S-R Party was split. A considerable part broke away from its Central Committee. The emerging organisations of Revolutionary Communists and Populist Communists (they included A. L. Kolegayev and G. D. Zax) later joined the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks). At the Sixth Congress of Soviets in November 1918 the complete collapse of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries became obvious. Of the 963 deputies with the right to vote, only nine were S-Rs, while 946 were Bolsheviks. Among the 333 non-voting deputies there were 314 Bolsheviks.³ The Communist Party had won the confidence of the broadest masses, it alone reflected their radical

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Valuable Admissions of Pitirim Sorokin", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 187.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *op. cit.*, p. 304.

³ *Congresses of Soviets of the RSFSR...*, Vol. I, p. 87.

interests. And that in a situation of famine, of the most violent civil war and foreign intervention, when the Party could not provide either enough food or the desired peace.

In the summer of 1918 the Soviet Republic was encircled by war fronts: Murmansk and Archangel were occupied by Entente interventionist forces; Czechoslovaks and whiteguards had created a front in the east; Japanese and Americans had landed in Vladivostok; white Cossacks were lording it in Turkestan; the Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Baltic area were in the hands of German occupation troops who were also supporting Krasnov's army on the Don; in the autumn, British troops arrived in Transcaucasia, replacing the Germans. Only the central provinces with a population of 61 million remained Soviet.¹ The fate of the Revolution became a military problem. It called for extraordinary measures to save Soviet rule. On July 29, 1918 a joint session of the ARCEC, the Moscow Soviet and the trade unions and works committees of Moscow declared: "The Socialist Fatherland Is in Danger", and proclaimed the slogan "Death or Victory!"²

Kulak rebellions kept breaking out, accompanied with savage massacres of the Soviet Government's supporters. In Yaroslavl, an uprising of whiteguard officers was led by the Union of Defence of the Motherland and Freedom founded by the Right S-R B. V. Savinkov. It was put down by Soviet troops, just as the rebellions in Rybinsk and Murom. The enemies of Soviet power launched a mass white terror campaign against the workers and peasants. The British interventionist force that occupied Baku, acting hand in glove with Right S-Rs, captured 26 Baku commissars, including the leading party members S. G. Shahumyan, P. A. Japaridze and Ya. D. Zevin. All were shot in the vicinity of Krasnovodsk. Right S-Rs began to carry out terrorist acts against the leaders of the Communist Party and Soviet Government. V. Volodarsky and M. S. Uritsky were murdered in Petrograd. On August 30, the leader of the Revolution Vladimir Lenin was shot at and heavily wounded in Moscow.

The Soviet Government was forced to respond with terror. On the day of attack on Lenin, the ARCEC Chairman Sverdlov called on the workers to close ranks and reply to the attempts made on their leaders "with merciless mass terror against all enemies of the Revolution".³ On September 2, the ARCEC confirmed his call and declared the Soviet Republic an armed camp.⁴ The Cheka unearthed dozens of organisations of counter-revolutionaries, among which it liquidated the anti-Soviet conspiracy of the British Ambassador Robert

¹ *Izvestiya VTsIK*, December 21, 1920.

² *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. III, pp. 107-08.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 267-68.

Lockhart (the "conspiracy of three ambassadors", involving also the French Ambassador Noulens and the American Francis). On September 5, the Council of People's Commissars adopted a decision, on the report of the chairman of the Extraordinary Commission, which said that "in the present situation it is a direct necessity to secure the rear by means of terror". Experienced Party workers were seconded to the staff of the Cheka to strengthen it.¹

The Communist Party always considered the extensive use of coercion by the working class and its government as a forced measure. Lenin, barely recovering from his wounds, stressed that "legality must be raised (or rigorously observed)". Although "emergency measures of *warfare* against counter-revolution should not be restricted by the laws", they were only admissible on the condition that the responsibility of both Soviet institutions and officials for their application was heightened.² A corresponding decision on revolutionary legality was taken by the 6th Congress of Soviets on November 8, 1918.³ By that time the Republic, having won major victories over the counter-revolution, was consolidating itself. In that situation, measures of suppression began to slacken.

Red terror, Lenin pointed out, "was necessary because all the petty-bourgeois democrats had turned against us. They used all kinds of methods against us—civil war, bribery and sabotage. It was these conditions that necessitated the terror. Therefore we should not repent or renounce it."⁴ Elaborating on the issue he wrote: "Socialism is opposed to violence against men in general. Apart from Christian anarchists and Tolstoyans, however, no one has yet drawn the conclusion from this that socialism is opposed to *revolutionary* violence." To talk about "coercion" or "violence" in general, therefore, without distinguishing between reactionary violence and revolutionary violence meant to disavow revolution or deceive both oneself and others.⁵

The foreign intervention and aggravation of the civil war called for the creation of a million-strong Red Army. The influx of volunteers, mainly workers, into its ranks had already risen noticeably when the German Army threatened Petrograd in the latter half of February 1918. In those days 22,000 worker-volunteers signed up in Petrograd, and nearly 20,000 in Moscow. In the second half of May the Red Army had more than 320,000 fighters. But that was no longer

¹ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, p. 291.

² V.I. Lenin, "Rough Theses of a Decision on the Strict Observance of the Laws", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, pp. 110-11.

³ *Congresses of Soviets of the RSFSR...*, Vol. I, pp. 93-94.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Moscow Party Workers' Meeting. November 27, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 207-08.

⁵ V.I. Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *op. cit.*, p. 286.

sufficient. At the end of April 1918 universal military training was introduced, which was carried on without time off from work. Soon the Central Committee of the RCP (B) made it binding on all party members to undergo instruction in military matters.

On 29 May 1918 the ARCEC passed a decision on going over from voluntary military service to conscription.¹ A special resolution of the 5th All-Russia Congress of Soviets on the organisation of the Red Army said that "the period of spontaneous formation of irregular squads and primitive organisation must be relegated to the past".² The building of the Red Army on a new basis was begun with mobilisation in the leading industrial centres. Workers were the first to be called up in the summer of 1918; it was necessary to build a strong, disciplined proletarian cadre around which a mass worker and peasant army would be formed.

A decree of the Council of People's Commissars of August 2, 1918 stipulated the enlistment for commanding posts of "honest, courageous sons of the people from amongst former NCOs".³ Such outstanding commanders as V. K. Blyukher, S. M. Budyonny, G. I. Kotovsky, F. F. Raskolnikov, M. N. Tukhachevsky, V. I. Chapayev, N. A. Shchors, I. E. Yakir and many others came from privates, NCOs and junior officers. Senior army officers also joined the Red Army, among them V. M. Altfater, M. D. Bonch-Bruyevich, A. A. Brusilov, I. I. Vacietis, A. I. Egorov, S. S. Kamenev, D. M. Karbyshev and B. M. Shaposhnikov. By the end of 1918 alone more than 22,000 former generals and officers had been enlisted in the Red Army.

Military commissars contributed greatly to the building and consolidation of the Red Army. On April 8, 1918 an All-Russia Bureau of Military Commissars was set up. The MCs were representatives of the Party in the army, bearers of its ideas, they promoted discipline, courage and tenacity in the fight for socialism. The names of such commissars as Ya. B. Gamarnik, V. V. Kuibyshev, N. G. Markin, D. A. Furmanov and many others have passed into history. In September 1918 Revolutionary Military Councils (RMCs) were instituted for the Republic, the fronts and armies. They implemented directives of the Party, functioning under the control of the Central Committee. In order to organise the army supplies an Emergency Commission for Logistics was set up under the chairmanship of the prominent party worker L. B. Krasin.

An important feature of the Red Army was its international composition. Not only did representatives of all the nationalities and ethnic groups of Russia fight in its ranks, but also various units, groups and whole formations made up of foreign workers. On February

¹ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. II, pp. 334-35.

² *Congresses of Soviets of the RSFSR...*, Vol. I, p. 68.

³ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. III, p. 133.

20, 1918, when German troops were moving on Petrograd, ex-POWs who were there gathered at a meeting and resolved: "Let the German imperialists and their Russian colleagues, the bourgeoisie, know that the proletariat of Russia does not stand alone! At the critical moment it is assured the support of many thousands of prisoners-of-war. The bourgeois bands will only be able to take the red forts of the Russian Revolution over the bodies of proletarians."¹ Tens of thousands of foreign workers, moved by proletarian solidarity, volunteered for the Red Army and took on Soviet citizenship.

The American journalist Albert Rhys Williams subsequently told how Lenin reacted to his desire to volunteer for the revolutionary army: "Eying me with that inquisitive, discerning look, his eyes crinkling up in a smile, he said in an offhand manner: 'One foreigner can't do much fighting. Maybe you can find others.'

"That is the way our International Legion came into being. I said I should like to try my hand at getting up a detachment....

"Picking up a telephone, he tried to reach Krylenko, the Soviet commander in chief. Failing, he picked up a pen and scribbled a note to him. As I was to learn, this did not end Lenin's activity and characteristic attention to detail so far as the Legion and its formation went....

"It appeared in *Pravda* February 23. And it was on Lenin's order that a briefer, snappier appeal to join was telegraphed throughout Russia later and translated into five languages."² The International Legion was joined by Poles, Czechs, Germans, Englishmen, Chinese, Romanians, Finns, Italians, Americans and others.

The organisers of many of the international formations were the communist groups of internationalists that began to emerge at the end of 1917 and united, in May 1918, in a Federation of Foreign Groups of the RCP(B). It consisted of national groups—Hungarian, German, Southern Slav (soon divided into Southern Slav and Bulgarian groups), Czechoslovak, Anglo-French (later divided into French and Anglo-American groups) and Romanian. The Polish and Finnish communist organisations had their own bureaux under the Central Committee of the RCP(B). In August a Communist Party of the foreign workers and peasants of Turkestan was formed. The chairman of the Central Federation was the Hungarian Béla Kun. In Lenin's words the work of the Federation represented "one of the most significant features in the activities of the Russian Communist Party as one of the units of the World Communist Party".³

¹ *Pravda*, February 21, 1918.

² Albert Rhys Williams, *Journey into Revolution, Petrograd, 1917-1918*, Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1969, p. 240.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 161.

The Federation carried on extensive agitation and propaganda, published newspapers, leaflets and appeals in many languages, distributed not only among POWs and in areas occupied by the interventionists, but also deep into the rear of the enemy. It was involved in the organisation of the international units of the Red Army in 85 points including Moscow, Samara, Saratov, Perm, Oryol, Yaroslavl, and also Irkutsk and a number of other towns in Siberia. The 1st Moscow International Communist Legion formed in late May and early June 1918, whose political commissar was the Hungarian Tibor Szamuely, was soon sent to the Urals Front, then transferred to the Ukraine. A battalion of internationalists took part in defeating the Left S-R rebellion in Moscow. By September 1918 more than 50,000 foreign workers were fighting on the various fronts. Units were commanded by the Poles Stanislaw Bobiński and Stanislaw Żbikowski, the Hungarians Béla Kun, Tibor Szamuely, Károly Ligeti, Lazar Wienerman, and Ferenc Munnich, the Czechs Jaroslav Hašek and S. Častek, the Yugoslavs Danilo Srđić and E. Chopp, and many others.¹ In August 1918, before the departure of the Red Warsaw Revolutionary Regiment for the front, Lenin said at a meeting: "It is your great privilege to uphold sacred ideas arms in hand, and to make international brotherhood of nations a reality by fighting together with your front-line enemies of yesterday—Germans, Austrians and Magyars."² Shoulder to shoulder with the workers and peasants of Russia the internationalists defended the Soviet Republic against the interventionists and whiteguards.

In the difficult situation of civil war and foreign intervention, the Party turned the country into an armed camp, and sent tens of thousands of Communists to the front. In the autumn the Red Army succeeded in repulsing the onslaught of the White Czechs. On September 10, Kazan was liberated, and on the 12th troops commanded by P. A. Slaven and M. N. Tukhachevsky liberated Lenin's home town Simbirsk. In November, troops of the Eastern Front reached the Ural River. On the Northern Front the attack of the interventionists moving on Vologda was successfully held, and Tsaritsyn was defended and held on the Southern Front.

On the first anniversary of the Socialist Revolution Lenin said: "We began our Revolution in unusually difficult conditions, such as no other workers' revolution in the world will ever have to face." Looking back over the road travelled, he noted: "From workers' control, the working class's first steps ... we are now on the threshold of creating a workers' administration of industry; from the general peasants' struggle for land ... we have now reached a stage where the

¹ *The Internationalists*, pp. 209-12.

² V.I. Lenin, "Speech at a Meeting of the Warsaw Revolutionary Regiment, August 2, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 39.

proletarian and semi-proletarian elements in the countryside have set themselves apart." These elements now set about building a new life.

Starting from the first steps of Soviet organisation, he continued, the country now arrived at an integrated system consolidated in the Soviet Constitution. Completely defenceless at the outset, Soviet Russia now had a powerful Red Army. Referring to the revolutionary upsurge in the centre of Europe, Lenin emphasised: "Finally, and most important of all, we have come from being isolated internationally, from which we suffered both in October and at the beginning of the year, to a position ... where we are marching side by side, shoulder to shoulder with our international allies."¹

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Extraordinary Sixth All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants', Cossacks' and Red Army Deputies", *Collected Works* Vol. 28, pp. 137-39.

Chapter 3

THE POST-OCTOBER REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE

INTERNATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

The triumph of the October Revolution radically altered Russia's role in the revolutionary process. At the beginning of the century, when the centre of the world revolutionary movement had shifted there, it seemed that the Russian Revolution would be only the prologue to the European revolution. During the World War Lenin had remarked that war directly linked "the Russian revolutionary crisis, which stems from a bourgeois-democratic revolution, with the growing crisis of the proletarian socialist revolution in the West".¹ The forthcoming revolution in Russia "is now not only a prologue to, but an indivisible and integral part of the socialist revolution in the West".² The locomotive of history, however, carried the working class of Russia even further forward. The Russian working class carried out the world's first victorious socialist revolution and opened the road of transition from capitalism to socialism for all nations.

Speaking of this accomplishment, Lenin noted in March 1918: "We are not merely a weak and backward people, we are the people who have been able—not because of any special services or of historical predestination, but because of a definite conjunction of historical circumstances—who have been able to accept the honour of raising the banner of the international socialist revolution."³ Elaborating on that idea imbued with profound internationalism and combining national pride with national modesty, he pointed out that it had been easier to begin the revolution in Russia than in the advanced capitalist countries. One of the many reasons for that was that the working class in the West was confronted by a highly organised, highly experienced bourgeoisie, while in Russia it had to fight "the most backward and most rotten political system" in Europe.⁴

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Defeat of Russia and the Revolutionary Crisis", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, 1974, p. 379.

² V.I. Lenin, "Lecture on the 1905 Revolution", *op. cit.*, Vol. 23, 1964, p. 252.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Extraordinary Fourth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, March 14-16, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, Moscow, 1965, p. 188.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

The American Communist John Reed did not exaggerate when he wrote that the October Revolution shook the world. The most vicious enemies of the revolution, as well as its friends, felt that the very foundations of the world capitalist system were rocking. The world was immediately split into two camps. Many people, moreover, supposed at first, some with alarm and some with hope, that Soviet power in Russia would be unable to maintain itself and consolidate its position. For it stood alone facing enormous, unprecedented difficulties. But the tenacity, self-control, and capacity for self-sacrifice of the Russian proletariat and its leaders soon produced results. At the same time it became evident that the Russian Revolution was not a bit isolated from the rest of the world, but, on the contrary, was linked by thousands of threads with the struggle of the international proletariat and all oppressed peoples, and with the world revolutionary process.

The immediate effect of the October Revolution on the world was exceptionally varied and diverse. All progressive forces experienced its influence, but its various aspects had a greater or less repercussion depending on the concrete historical conditions of the region or country, and on the character and level of political maturity of the various social strata. In some cases the greatest impact resulted from Soviet Russia's revolutionary exodus from the imperialist war and its passionate call for a universal democratic peace, in others it was the example of the revolutionary transformations undertaken by the Workers' and Soldiers' Soviets, the unprecedented radicalism in tackling social problems in town and country, in yet other cases it was the scale and depth of the national liberation measures in regard to backward and oppressed nations, or, furthermore, the heroism and self-sacrifice of the workers and peasants in defending the freedoms and independence won. The call of the October Revolution to rally the revolutionary proletarians and working people rang across the world. The first responses of foreign revolutionaries to the establishment of a government of Soviets and its first decrees expressed admiration of the scale and depth of the political and social reforms begun, and the boldness of the Russian proletariat's leadership which was able to lead the millions of the oppressed and exploited peoples of a vast country. They realised that the events in Russia would have immense significance for the development of the revolutionary liberation movement throughout the world.

In the European continent, the battlefield of a fierce, bloody exhausting war, the Soviet Government's proposals for the immediate conclusion of an armistice as the road to a universal democratic peace without annexations or indemnities and for recognition of the right of all nations to national self-determination found, naturally, a liveliest response. The new mass organisations, the Workers' and

Soldiers' Soviets, also produced a big impression. Similar bodies began to arise in several European countries, even before they became sovereign authorities in Russia following the October Revolution.

In April 1917, for example, the first Workers' Council was set up by striking workers in Leipzig. The leaders of the German seamen's insurrection in Wilhelmshaven in August of the same year called for the "formation of sailors' Councils on the Russian model".¹ When news of the revolutionary actions of the Soviet Government and the Bolsheviks penetrated the front lines, the obstacles of the military censorship and the distorting mirrors of the capitalist press in Germany, Karl Liebknecht wrote from prison: "The vast process of the social and economic revolutionising of Russia from bottom to top ... at the beginning, not at the close, has immense potentialities, far exceeding those the Great French Revolution had." He was yearning to know more about the events in Russia than he could glean from the German capitalist press. "In nothing," he wrote, "do I feel the isolation of my present position so much as in the Russian question."²

Rosa Luxemburg, also in prison at the time, emphasised the "matchless radicalism" and "vast scale" of the Russian Revolution, the profound force with which it "shook all class relations" and put all social and economic problems on the agenda, and its enormous influence on the whole world.³ And the leader of the Bremen Left Radicals, Johann Knief, called Lenin "the Marat of the Russian Revolution", expressing pleasure that "a man of untamed revolutionary fire, an iron character, of tremendous energy and unbending consistency, a mortal enemy of any disruptive opportunism" was at the head of the Russian state. Lenin's Party, he wrote, not only reflected the will of the industrial proletariat which had become aware in a half-year of revolution that only its rule could save the revolution, but also expressed the hopes of all working people, exhausted by the war, suffering, and hunger. The Bolsheviks were now "setting about cleaning the Russian Augean stables, restoring Russia's economy, and bringing the world peace".⁴

An illegal leaflet distributed in Germany said: "Our heroic brothers in Russia have wiped out the accursed stronghold of the dirty butchers of their country.... Your happiness, your deliverance depend on whether you have the resolve and strength to follow the example of our Russian brothers... A victorious revolution does not need as

¹ Albert Schreiner, *Zur Geschichte der deutschen Aussenpolitik*, Vol. I, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1952, p. 400.

² Karl Liebknecht, *Gesammelte Reden und Schriften*, Vol. IX, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1968, p. 371.

³ Rosa Luxemburg, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 4, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1974, p. 332.

⁴ *Arbeiterpolitik*, Bremen, November 17, 1917, p. 347.

many sacrifices as a single day out there on the battlefield where insane war rages."¹

Workers' and Soldiers' Councils arose in several cities in Austro-Hungary. "An event of immense importance has taken place today," the periodical of Austrian Social-Democrats wrote, "the dictatorship of the proletariat has come true in Petersburg.... We send our warmest wishes to our Russian brothers today! If they win in the fight that they have boldly begun, this will open a new era in the struggle for liberation of the international proletariat! In Russia they are fighting for our common cause today: above all the cause of peace."²

In Budapest people at a mass meeting held on November 25 shouted "Let Hungarian workers learn from the Russians!" Their resolution expressed admiration for the Russian revolutionaries who were "freeing mankind from the noose of war with bold hearts, firm will, and strong hands". The workers of Hungary, it said, were "fully resolved to support the Russian revolutionaries in their heroic struggle to conclude peace, and we will also fight with all our might to wipe out exploitation of one class by another in our country, and oppression of one nation by another!"³ On December 2, 1917 a workers' demonstration in Prague welcomed the peace initiative of the Soviet Government and in an address to the workers of Russia declared that "the Social-Democratic proletariat of Czechia is with them in their great fight to defend the world's first socialist republic."⁴

A manifesto of the Maximalist Socialist group in Romania said that "the energy, honour and convictions of the Russian workers, and revolutionary socialism have saved humanity from destruction".⁵ The left-wing Serbian Social-Democrat Triša Katzlerović said that the Russian Revolution was a blessing for all mankind, which had "realised the great principle of self-determination of nations. The Serbian people would commit a mortal sin if they made common cause with the enemies of the Russian Revolution."⁶ The newspaper of the Bulgarian Tesnyaki noted: "The great events in Russia have once more caught the attention of the whole world. Since November 7 the Great Russian Republic has taken a new, clear and distinctly defined road.... The Russian revolutionary proletariat ... has done an unforgettable historical service to humanity and deserves the title

¹ "Materials of the USSR Museum of the Revolution. New Documents on the Effect of the October Revolution on the Countries of the West", *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, 1957, No. 4, p. 225 (in Russian).

² *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, November 9, 1917.

³ *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, 1957, No. 4, p. 223.

⁴ *Právo lidu*, December 3, 1917.

⁵ *Proletarian Solidarity in the Fight for Peace (1917-1924)*, Moscow, 1958, p. 36 (in Russian).

⁶ *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, 1957, No. 4, p. 219.

of saviour of mankind from complete self-destruction."¹

The leaders of the Polish Left Socialists wrote in their appeal in December 1917 that the Russian proletariat, and the millions upon millions of the workers and peasants had become the vanguard of the international revolutionary army. Their achievements, their declaration of ruthless war on the war were producing results. "The workers of all lands see from a practical example that the slaves can themselves become the masters of their situation, lawmakers and organisers of a new life.... The breath of revolution is bursting across the war fronts, reviving the workers' ranks, transforming their minds and will and imperceptibly preparing centres of new revolutionary explosions.... At a time when our Russian comrades are fighting fatal battles against hostile forces, when the revolutionary ferment is sweeping Europe, the Polish proletariat must raise high the banner of struggle. A hundred times oppressed and a hundred times humiliated by military defeats, it must join the ranks of the revolutionary army as one man."²

Revolutionaries' calls to support Soviet Russia and to combine solidarity actions with it with their own revolutionary struggle found a lively response among the broadest sections of the working class. In November and December 1917 a wave of meetings, demonstrations and strikes rolled across many cities in Central Europe, where the thirst for peace was especially strong. Even the Social-Democratic politicians who did not call their workers to revolutionary action admitted that "the Russian Revolution is not only fighting for the vital interests of the Russian people, it is at the same time the defender of the principles of international democracy". So the well-known Austrian Socialist Otto Bauer, just back in Vienna from captivity in Russia, wrote. Pointing out that "the whole future of the European proletariat hangs on victory of the Russian Revolution", he explained: "The Russian Revolution cannot end the war so long as the German workers have not broken the power of the German annexationists; it cannot force peace so long as the workers of England, France, Italy and America do not force the governments of their countries to make peace."³

The workers of the Entente Powers also welcomed the Russian Revolution with enthusiasm, highly hopeful it would lead to an end of the war. In Italy the slogan "Do like Russia!" had already become common in the summer of 1917. One of the leaders of the Italian Socialists, Giacinto Serrati, recalled a journey through the country:

¹ *Rabotnicheski vestnik*, November 10, 1917.

² *Proletarian Solidarity in the Fight for Peace...*, pp. 39-40.

³ Heinrich Weber (Otto Bauer), *Die russische Revolution und das europäische Proletariat*, Vienna, 1917, pp. 31, 33, 40.

"We crossed the whole peninsula from Rome to Bardonecchio to unending shouts of 'Viva Lenin! Down with the War!'. The only colour those stormy days was red."¹ In August an armed anti-war insurrection broke out in Turin, which was only suppressed on the fifth day of fighting. A popular song of the day went as follows: "We'll do like Russia. We'll make a revolution that will end the bloodshed... We dream of peace and will make it."²

A determination to fight for peace also rose among the French workers. "In Russia," wrote a left-wing newspaper, "a revolution has flared up, accomplished by the working class... A movement, though less intense, yet similar, is underway in France. The edifice put up by the bourgeoisie has already more than once shown fissures on its walls and seemed to us visibly rocking."³ Anti-war moods engulfed the intelligentsia. The Republican Association of Ex-Servicemen (ARAC) founded by the young writers Henri Barbusse, Paul Vailant-Couturier, and Raymond Lefèvre made its motto "War on the War". Barbusse wrote in its name: "We want to know the truth. We want to know the aims of the war, all the aims of the war: ours and the Allies'...."

"No annexations, no indemnities, no economic barriers, liberty for the enslaved populations to decide their fate themselves, ... peace negotiations directly with representatives of the German people."⁴ Rolland noted in his diary on December 6: "The victory of the Russian Revolution seems to be essential for the future of Europe."⁵

In Britain a Conference of Labour, Socialist and Democratic organisations was held in Leeds in the summer of 1917 under the slogan "Follow Russia!". Its resolutions called directly for the formation of workers' and soldiers' councils.⁶ The authorities set "patriotic" thugs against the supporters of the Soviets. The left-wing socialist newspaper *The Workers' Dreadnought* wrote that the Bolsheviks' success was opening the door to freedom for the people of all countries.⁷ The weekly of the British Socialist Party *The Call* wrote: "In Russia, the working class and the labouring masses of peasantry in

¹ G.M. Serrati, *The Manual for a Perfect Convict*, Moscow, 1929, p. 41 (in Russian).

² Cited from N.P. Komolova, "The Great October and the Revolutionary Process in Italy". In *The Great October Socialist Revolution and the Countries of Western Europe*, Moscow, 1978, p. 95 (in Russian).

³ *L'Oeuvre*, 15 August, 1917.

⁴ Henri Barbusse, *Paroles d'un combattant. Articles et Discours (1917-1920)*, Flammarion, Paris, 1921, p. 47.

⁵ Romain Rolland, *Journal des années de guerre 1914-1919. Notes et documents pour servir à l'histoire morale de l'Europe de ce temps*, Albin Michel, Paris, 1952, p. 1370.

⁶ Philip Viscount Snowden, *An Autobiography*, Vol. 1, 1864-1919, London, 1934, p. 453.

⁷ *The Workers' Dreadnought*, November 17, 1917.

and out of military uniform, under the leadership of revolutionary Social-Democracy, have attained to power and are carrying through a number of measures drastically altering the capitalist order of society and tending to establish the reign of Socialism."¹

The workers of the USA, who only got news of the "Bolshevist Revolution" in Russia through a double filter, the Administration and the Big Press, warmly welcomed it. Class instinct told them correctly that the Soviet Government was bringing peace and the abolition of capitalist exploitation, and that turned the "Russian question" into an important factor of the class struggle in the USA. The Socialist Party greeted the October Revolution with enthusiasm. The organ of its left wing *Class Struggle* wrote that the Russian Revolution was "the transformation of the aspiration for the Socialist Revolution into a fact of immediate, palpitant importance to all the world".²

The United States was swept by a wave of demonstrations in which workers expressed their solidarity with Soviet Russia. At a meeting in Seattle, Washington, in December 1917, workers greeted the Russian proletariat who, they said, was the first to score a victory over capital. They expressed their sympathy and said they would prove their proletarian solidarity in practice. A short while later, American workers sent the Soviet Government a letter saying: "Your struggle is essentially our struggle and your victory—our victory and any defeat which you may suffer will be a blow in the face for us. Rest assured, fellow-workers, that your victory which is paving the way for the foundation of the first true republic of the producers of riches, will not have the whole world against it. The proletariat of the other countries will make a supreme effort to throw off the parasites and set up a similar social order in its land."³

In Japan workers displayed a lively interest in the liberation goals of the October Revolution. The Executive Committee of the Socialist groups of Tokyo and Yokohama declared in the message "To Russian Comrades": "From the very start of the Russian Revolution we have followed your intrepid activity with great enthusiasm. Your accomplishments have had an immense influence on the psychology of our nation.... We indignantly protest against the sending of Japanese troops to Siberia, because we are afraid that their presence may obstruct the free development of your revolution. We profoundly regret that our numerical weakness does not let us avert the danger that threatens you from our government.... But we assure you that the Red Flag of revolution will soon be flown over Japan, too."⁴

¹ *The Call* (London), December 20, 1917.

² P.H. Anderson, *The Attitude of the American Leftist Leaders toward the Russian Revolution (1917-1923)*, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1942, p. 51.

³ *Lenin Through the Eyes of the World. Letters and Comments from Abroad*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, p. 71.

⁴ *Heimin shimbun*, 1919, No. 21.

People in the neutral countries of Europe were not bypassed by the influence of the October Revolution either. Even before Swiss internationalists called on the workers to support the fighters of the Russian Revolution and, by following their example, to free themselves from the yoke of nationalism and capitalism,¹ the proletariat of Zurich had begun to act. The moods of the workers were already explosive when the news of the Bolshevik victory in Petersburg arrived. It had a great effect on the masses. A meeting on November 15, planned to be held in the People's House, had to move out to the open square. The demonstrators marched on the munitions factories. Meetings and marches continued for another two days and led to clashes with the police, the storming of a police station, and the raising of barricades. Only the machine-gun fire of troops suppressed the spontaneous action on November 18.²

The Left Swedish Social-Democrat Carl Höglund declared that the Russian workers and peasants had given a shining example that should be followed by their comrades everywhere. That was their duty to the Russian proletariat, which was making immense sacrifices for triumph of the cause of socialism.³ And a leading member of the Norwegian Labour Party, Einar Gerhardsen recalled that the development of revolutionary Russia since the Bolshevik victory supported the left forces in the Norwegian labour movement, and that there was enormous interest in it. In Christiania, he said, and throughout the country, there had been meetings in packed halls. Himself active in the labour movement for many years, he could not remember anything to provoke such great interest.⁴

Revolutionaries and leaders of labour organisations in Latin America met the first news of the revolution in Russia with enthusiasm. Many openly called themselves "Bolsheviks". But as the Cuban publicist Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring wrote, his Bolshevism was not a copy of Russian Bolshevism, "if only because, inter alia, I am a Cuban and live in Cuba. But I am convinced that if I were a Russian and lived in Russia, I would have gone along with the Great Revolution that brought the Bolsheviks to power on November 7, 1917 and would have been together with Lenin."⁵

The Chilean democrat Juan Pradenas Muñoz considered Lenin's victory over Kerensky a victory of the people over the bourgeoisie, a victory for the proletariat, and a defeat for those who illegally

¹ *La Nouvelle Internationale* (Geneva), November 17, 1917.

² H. Egger, *Die Entstehung der Kommunistischen Partei und des Kommunistischen Jugendverbandes der Schweiz*, Zurich, 1952, pp. 102-03, 113-18.

³ *Proletarian Solidarity in the Fight for Peace...*, p. 35.

⁴ Quoted from *The Great October Socialist Revolution and the Countries of Western Europe*, pp. 142-43.

⁵ E. Roig de Leuchsenring, *Los problemas sociales en Cuba* (Havana), p. 19, cited by A.M. Zorina, *The Labour Movement in Cuba*, Moscow, 1975 (in Russian).

kept ownership of the means of production in their own hands.¹

For the oppressed peoples of the colonial and dependent countries of Asia it was of paramount significance that the October Revolution for the first time in history firmly proclaimed the equality of all nations, great and small, developed and backward. That took place in a country that belonged geographically, economically and historically both to Europe and to Asia. That in itself to no small degree encouraged the rise of an anti-imperialist movement in Asian countries that had acquired a true and faithful ally in the Soviet Government set up by the Revolution. Nariman Narimanov wrote that Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia, which spoke of the full emancipation of all nations suffering oppression and tyranny, "struck like the lightning on the heads of those who had got used to their plight and who had long decided that it was probably kismet. They were roused from their lethargy, they got to know Lenin."²

A message addressed to Soviet Russia was published in underground Indian newspapers in January 1918. It said: "Leaders of the Russian Revolution! India congratulates you on the great victory you have won in the interests of democracy for the whole world. India admires the noble, humanitarian principles that you have proclaimed on seizing power. India asks Providence to strengthen you in your devotion to these lofty ideals. At the same time, however, India fears for the length of your success, for, while England holds the 350 millions of the population of India in an enslaved condition, we feel you will not succeed in realising your peaceful aspirations. For the sake of success of your noble aims, India warns you against friendship with England."³ A copy of the message was brought to Moscow from Delhi by a member of the Moslem National League, who had spent several difficult months to arrive.

Under the direct impact of the October Revolution the idea of national self-government became clearer and deeper for nationalist leaders in the Orient. In India, for instance, a resolution of the Indian National Congress in 1918 for the first time put forward and formulated a demand for full independence for the country.⁴ Jawaharlal Nehru subsequently recalled: "Almost simultaneously with the October Revolution led by the great Lenin we in India began a new phase of our struggle for freedom.... Although we took another road in our struggle, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, we admired Lenin and were influenced by his example."⁵

In 1918, the great Chinese revolutionary democrat Sun Yat-sen

¹ *Pravda*, October 25, 1967.

² *Lenin and the East*, Moscow, 1924, p. 10 (in Russian).

³ *Pravda*, November 17, 1918.

⁴ S.G. Sardesai, *India and the Russian Revolution*, New Delhi, 1967, p. 30.

⁵ *Pravda*, June 22, 1955.

wrote to Lenin and the Soviet Government of his deep admiration for "the hard struggle the Revolutionary Party of your country is waging", at the same time expressing the hope that "the Revolutionary Parties of China and Russia would unite for joint struggle".¹ Li Dazhao, one of the founders of the Communist Party of China, warmly welcomed the socialist revolution in Russia: "From now on the victorious banners of Bolshevism will be seen everywhere and its triumphant songs heard. It rings the bell of humanism. The dawn of freedom is rising. The future will be the world of Red Banner."²

The leader of the Turkish national liberation movement Mustafa Kemal Atatürk spoke, in a message to the Soviet Government, of "the sense of admiration the Turkish people feel for the Russians who, not satisfied with having struck off their own chains, have for already more than two years been waging an unparalleled struggle for the liberation of the whole world and despite unheard of sufferings work with enthusiasm for oppression to disappear forever from the face of the earth".³

One of the founders of the International Socialist League of South Africa, Ivon Jones, saw the victory of the October Revolution as the birth of the "world brotherhood of labour". We must, he wrote, "smash the attempts to set workers against the Russian Revolution. We must light in their hearts the flame of this most glorious and peaceful revolution in history."⁴

As only happens with events of a truly epochal character, the impact of the October Revolution on other countries and continents was by no means limited to its direct and immediate repercussions in the first months after victory. Its international influence made itself felt with ever greater force and on an ever greater scale as more time passed. For the soil on which it had grown was international.

By the end of the imperialist World War the contradictions of capitalism had become so deep and acute, especially in the belligerent countries, that the system as a whole was "ripe", in Marxists' belief, for revolution which had broken out with enormous explosive force in Russia. But the international character of the socialist revolution did not mean either its simultaneity for all nor the possibility of its being transferred from one country to another. However great the significance of its example and however strong its impact on the

¹ Peng Ming, *History of Chinese-Soviet Friendship*, Moscow, 1959, p. 68 (in Russian).

² Li Dazhao, *Selected Articles and Speeches*, Moscow, 1965, pp. 67, 80 (in Russian).

³ Cited from *History of the International Relations and Foreign Policy of the USSR. 1917-1939*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1961, p. 162 (in Russian).

⁴ Cited from *The Revolution that Changed the World*, Moscow, 1977, p. 115 (in Russian).

development of the revolutionary movement in other countries, the maturing of the revolution in each of them proceeded in their own special internal conditions, and was determined by the level of social development and the balance of class-political forces.

"The Russian people," Lenin said on January 26, 1918, "were the first to raise the torch of the socialist revolution, but they are aware that they are not alone in their struggle and that they will accomplish their task with the help of the most loyal comrades and friends. We don't know how long it will take for the socialist revolution to break out in other countries—it may take a long time."¹ The very next day a revolution began in Finland, which was the first European country to follow Russia onto the revolutionary road.

THE WORKERS' REVOLUTION IN FINLAND

For more than a century Finland had been part of the Russian Empire, but had nevertheless preserved a certain autonomy and political conditions similar to West European. At the same time it was a predominantly peasant country. Agriculture provided the source of livelihood for two-thirds of the population, and work in industry for only 12 per cent. The numbers of the factory proletariat hardly exceeded 100,000, and of agricultural labourers 300,000. The 150,000 small tenant farmers and poor landless peasants were in a similar position to the labourers.

In 1917, almost all the urban workers and part of the agricultural labourers of Finland were taking an active part in the strike movement. The Social-Democratic Party of Finland (SDPF), which dated from 1899, was based on developed trade unions, had an influential press, and held 92 seats in the Sejm out of the 200. To be sure, it had a majority in the Sejm elected in 1916 (103 seats). After the overthrow of the autocracy six of the right-wing Social-Democrats joined the coalition Senate (Government) headed by the Social-Democrat O. Tokoi. But when in July 1917 the Party managed to have a bill passed on sovereign authority of the Sejm, which was an important step toward Finland's independence, the Kerensky Government, taking advantage of the vacillations and defeatist mood of the capitalist deputies, dispersed the "Red Sejm". In the new elections in October 1917 the SDPF lost 11 seats, even though gaining more votes. In the autumn the Party withdrew from the Government, and on the eve of the October Revolution jointly with the unions put forward a radical programme of economic and political reforms, set out in the statement *We Demand*.

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Extraordinary All-Russia Railwaymen's Congress, January 5-30 (Jan. 18-Feb. 12)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 492-93.

In November 1917 a revolutionary situation built up in Finland under the direct impact of the Socialist Revolution in neighbouring Petrograd. At the Congress of Trade Unions that opened on November 12, the leader of the Red Guard formed in the summer Eero Haapalainen and other delegates called for following the Russian example. The Congress insisted that the bourgeoisie meet the workers' demands generalised in the slogan "Bread and Rights!" It was a matter of urgent measures to overcome the food crisis and unemployment, legalise the eight-hour day, introduce social insurance, free small tenant farmers from the grip of their landlords, and disarm and disband the bourgeois defence squads (*skjutskar*).

When the bourgeois majority in the Sejm refused to meet these demands, a general strike began on November 14. The working class, relying on the Red Guard, became the actual master of the situation. It was thirsting for battle and ready, along with the Left Social-Democrats, to make a revolution on the Russian model. But the Central Revolutionary Council that was leading the strike vacillated. The Left Social-Democrats at its head took a centrist stand at that moment, doubting the strength of the Soviet Government which was establishing itself in Russia and the imminence of a proletarian revolution in the West. The Council did not venture to take power, and when the Sejm yielding to the pressure of the masses passed the bills on the eight-hour day and democratic elections to local government bodies, it called off the strike.

On December 6, 1917, the Sejm adopted a Declaration of the Independence of Finland (this date has since been marked as Independence Day). The Swinhufvud bourgeois government asked the capitalist countries to recognise Finland's independence. As they refused to do that before Russia did he turned to the Soviet Government. On December 31 the Council of People's Commissars passed a resolution recognising the state independence of the Finnish Republic. Although it was not difficult to foresee that the Finnish bourgeoisie would try to exploit the independence gained in their own class interests, the Soviet Government adhered firmly to the principle it had proclaimed, that of the right of nations to self-determination which includes secession and formation of independent states. In so doing it provided the necessary conditions for freeing the Finnish proletariat from the influence of bourgeois nationalists and for the further growth of its own class-consciousness. At the same time the Soviet Government was proposing a voluntary union with the Russian working people to the Finnish workers.

The Swinhufvud Government, however, under the guise of phrases about "national unity", prepared to suppress the workers' movement by force. The *skjutskar* armed squads were declared the government's army, and the former tsarist General Mannerheim was appointed

commander-in-chief. The Senate laid in stocks of food in the north of the country, and Swinhufvud began secret negotiations with Germany for military aid.

The preparations of the bourgeoisie for civil war showed the workers' leaders that an armed struggle for power was inevitable. The Council of the SDPF, endeavouring to forestall the actions of the counter-revolution, formed a Workers' Executive Committee on January 23, 1918, which gave instructions to prepare to seize power. In a Revolutionary Appeal to the People of Finland on January 27 the committee declared that from then on all power in the country belonged to "the organised working class and its revolutionary organs". On the night of January 27 Red Guard squads occupied government offices in Helsinki. Soon the whole industrial centre and south with Turku, Tampere, Lahti, Vyborg and other towns were in the workers' hands. Some members of the bourgeois Senate, however, left Helsinki beforehand and set themselves up in Vaasa as a white government which extended its power to the whole of the north and part of the centre, almost four-fifths of the area of Finland in which half its population lived. The bulk of the *skjutskår* had earlier been concentrated there. The Whites began civil war on the night of February 27 with an attack on Russian garrisons stationed in northern Finland. Under the false slogan of a "liberation struggle against the Russians" and depicting the Finnish revolutionaries as Russian stooges, they succeeded in inflaming nationalism and drawing to their side the landed peasants who were told that the revolution would deprive them of their property. Peasants constituted the bulk of Mannerheim's counter-revolutionary army. The country was split into two parts, Red and White.

The revolutionary government set up on January 28, the Council of People's Representatives (CPR), was Social-Democratic. It included Kulervo Manner (Chairman), Yrjö Sirola, Otto Kuusinen, Alfred Taimi and others. Control over its activity was exercised by the Chief Workers' Council. The Senate apparatus was disbanded. Industrial committees were formed in enterprises, and the city *sejms* (governmental councils) of the workers' organisations, already set up in March 1917, were turning into organs of proletarian power.

The CPR declared its intention to take the road of socialist revolution, setting forth a priority programme of democratic reforms. By a decree of January 31, tenant farmers and landless peasants were declared independent of the landowners and made the owners, without remuneration, of the land they had rented. The abolition of survivals of feudalism drew these strata to the side of the revolution. The Bank of Finland was nationalised, private banks were closed, the enterprises of absconding owners and saboteurs were put under the control of the workers and government commissars, and work

was resumed in them. Measures were taken to overcome unemployment. The taxation system was reformed in the interests of the poor and needy, the organisation of food supplies was radically altered, legal procedures were restructured, revolutionary courts were set up and the death penalty was abolished. A reform of education began.¹

On February 23, 1918, a draft constitution was published that proclaimed Finland a democratic republic. It established full sovereignty of the people's representatives, opened broad opportunities for popular initiative, and introduced a system of measures against abuse of authority and to protect the rights of the individual. But neither the CPR's declaration nor the draft constitution provided for abolition of the economic power of the exploiting classes, nationalisation of industry and the banks, confiscation of large estates and forests, and distribution of land among small peasants. Yet only such measures could have created a solid basis for genuine democracy and consolidated the political power of the proletariat.

The logic of the revolutionary struggle, however, prompted the government to act more resolutely. Coming up against sabotage in the situation of civil war begun by the White Finns, it took measures to curb and suppress the bourgeoisie and began to exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat in practice. Lenin noted that, although workers' Soviets had not arisen in Finland, there was, "at any rate, a new type of power, proletarian power".² Subsequently, Finnish Communists said with full justification that "the workers' revolution in Finland was socialist in character, although the revolutionary government did not have a clear socialist programme at the beginning of the struggle".³

Red Finland viewed its struggle as part of the international revolutionary process. In an appeal to the proletariat of all countries the SDPF said that "the World War has increased the conditions for international action, so that this action has become a necessity.... We workers of a small country, address our battle call above all to you workers of the big capitalist countries: save mankind from destruction! It is a matter of the well-being of the younger generations! The worker fight must spread from country to country."⁴

Very friendly relations were established between Soviet Russia

¹ E. Torniainen, *The Workers' Revolution in Finland. A Short Outline of the Development of the Revolution and a View of the Reasons for Its Collapse*, Moscow-Petrograd, 1919, pp. 18-21, 26-32 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 6-8, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 133.

³ "The 40th Anniversary of the Workers' Revolution in Finland. Address of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Finland", *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, 1958, No. 2, p. 122.

⁴ V.M. Kholodkovsky, *The Revolution of 1918 in Finland and the German Intervention*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 115-16 (in Russian).

and revolutionary Finland. Soviet Russia immediately gave Red Finland help with grain, although its own food problem was extremely serious. Fodder, oil, textiles, leather and medicines were also sent. Fighting squads of Petrograd workers were sent to Vyborg and other areas. The Treaty on Strengthening Friendship and Brotherhood between the RSFSR and the Finnish Socialist Workers' Republic, signed on March 1, 1918, was the first case in history of a completely equal treaty between a big country and a small one.

On Lenin's instructions the Finnish Red Guard was given equipment, weapons and ammunition, and several thousand Russian volunteers and hundreds of Estonians fought in its ranks. But Soviet Russia's capacities of giving Red Finland military aid were limited. Meanwhile, the authorities of White Finland preparing to launch civil war requested Germany to send troops to Finland. The German military responded the more eagerly to Swinhufvud's call because they had their own far-reaching military and political plans. They counted on suppressing the Finnish workers to create, thereafter, a bridgehead in Finland from which to annihilate Bolshevism in Soviet Russia and consolidate themselves on the Baltic, securing their northern flank in the war against the Entente. Unlike revolutionary Finland's treaty with Soviet Russia, the treaties and agreements concluded by Germany with the White Finns made Finland politically dependent, and imposed crippling terms on it as regards trade and navigation.

On March 5, 1918, German troops landed on the Aland Islands, and on April 3 the Baltic Division of General von der Goltz landed at Hango. Other landings followed, and soon the number of interventionist troops was more than 15,000. The front was broken at Vilppula. On April 6, Tampere fell after a bloody battle. On April 11, the interventionists attacked Helsinki, and on the third day of the storm the city fell to the counter-revolutionaries. The CPR, which had moved to Vyborg, still continued to lead armed resistance, while the right-wing Social-Democratic leaders, led by Väinö Tanner, who had remained in Helsinki, issued an appeal on April 16 calling on the workers to lay down their arms immediately. That was a stab in the back of the revolution. Nevertheless, the Finnish proletariat continued to put up a stubborn resistance for almost the whole of April. Only after the fall of Vyborg on April 29 were the last squads of Red Guard forced to give up the struggle.

The defeat of the Finnish revolution, the decisive reason for which was German intervention, was accompanied with a monstrous orgy of white terror. The number of its direct victims was around 25,000. In Vyborg alone, 4,000 Red Guards and also Russians and Poles, including women and children, were shot without trial. 90,000 persons were thrown into prisons and concentration camps where thou-

sands of them died of hunger and hard conditions.¹ Finland became a vassal of Germany, freed later only by the latter's military defeat. Yet the Finnish bourgeoisie feared the workers, and that played a certain role in the fact that Finland did not take part in the Yudenich march on Petrograd.

The main lesson of the tragic outcome of the revolution was drawn by the left wing of the Social-Democratic Party, which self-critically appraised its experience.² On August 29, 1918 the leaders and participants of the revolution in Finland, emigrating to Soviet Russia, founded the Communist Party of Finland at a congress in Moscow. The new Party was greeted by Yakov Sverdlov, who stressed the "vital link that has united the proletariat of Russia and Finland in the days of struggle".³

In an open letter to Lenin on September 3, 1918 the Finnish Communists recognised that in the autumn of 1917 the proletariat had been ready to rise but the Social-Democratic Party, "the sole proletarian party of the country", had not. When the bourgeoisie unleashed a civil war, the Social-Democratic Party again reacted slowly. Despite its many services, the Party proved to be unable to lead the revolution. Its place had to be taken by a Party of Communists.⁴

While the Communist Party of Finland was forced to carry on the struggle in very difficult underground conditions for more than a quarter of a century after its foundation, the Social-Democratic Party of Finland, recreated on a reformist platform in December 1918 by Tanner and other right-wingers, remained legal, and its leader, having earned the trust of the capitalist class, led the government already in the 20s.

The workers' revolution of Finland in 1918 not only left deep traces on the national history of the country. The first European revolution after the October Revolution in Russia, it is one of the heroic pages in the history of the international labour movement.

A NEW STAGE IN THE ANTI-WAR AND SOCIAL STRUGGLE IN CAPITALIST COUNTRIES

The October Revolution did not simply intensify the anti-war struggle of the working people, but raised it to a qualitatively new stage, giving it a clearly expressed revolutionary character. In January

¹ V. Smirnov, *From the Revolutionary History of Finland in 1905, 1917 and 1918*, Leningrad, 1933, pp. 183-92 (in Russian).

² O.V. Kuusinen, *The Revolution in Finland (Self-criticism)*, Petrograd, 1919 (in Russian).

³ *Pravda*, September 17, 1918.

⁴ O.V. Kuusinen, *Selected Works, (1918-1964)*, Moscow, 1966, pp. 13-23 (in Russian).

1917, Lenin wrote: "We must not be deceived by the present grave-like stillness in Europe. Europe is pregnant with revolution. The monstrous horrors of the imperialist war, the suffering caused by the high cost of living everywhere engender a revolutionary mood."¹ In the year that followed, these moods pushed quite big groups into action more than once, though the actions did not develop evenly.

The Soviet Government's Decree on Peace for the first time gave the anti-war movement in all countries a clear, concrete programme of the main demands. Its most important points were a democratic peace without annexations and indemnities, free self-determination of nations, workers' representation at the peace negotiations. Bourgeois politicians striving to find a way from war to an imperialist peace without social disturbances hastened to confront Lenin's programme with President Wilson's 14 Points. But the European working class correctly sensed the deep connection between their own aspirations for an early ending of the disastrous war and Soviet Russia's peace proposals, which were soon followed by real actions: (fraternisation in the trenches, an armistice on the Eastern Front, the beginning of peace negotiations at Brest). So when it transpired that the German and Austro-Hungarian annexationists might wreck the conclusion of peace, the fury of the workers accumulated in the three and a half years of war broke out in a wave of hitherto unprecedented mass protest strikes in several countries in Central Europe.

On January 13, 1918 it became known in Vienna that the German General Staff, backed by the Austrian, had presented Soviet Russia with annexationist demands in categorical terms. The workers of *Austro-Hungary* saw in this a direct threat of collapse of all hopes for a speedy achievement of peace. In addition, a new reduction of the meagre flour ration had been announced just the day before. That same night, a leaflet was distributed in Wiener Neustadt saying: "The Russians and the Russian Revolution are showing us how to achieve peace! The Russian people have taught us what we must do to win rights and freedom. In Russia the land has been divided up among the people, and the mills and mines are becoming public property. Only thanks to the Russian Revolution have peace negotiations begun." Another leaflet called for a struggle for peace and liberty, and for the setting up of workers' and soldiers' councils "following the example of our Russian brothers".² On January 14 the Daimler munition works was stopped. The next day all enterprises in Vienna and the industrial towns of Lower Austria ceased work.

As Otto Bauer subsequently admitted, "The gigantic numbers of the strikers, the wild revolutionary fervour of their mass meeting,

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Lecture on the 1905 Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 253.

² *Weg und Ziel*, Vienna, No. 1, 1953, pp. 55; No. 1, 1960, p. 33.

the election of the first workers' councils at the strike meetings—all this gave the movement a grandiose revolutionary character and aroused among the masses the hope that the immediate outcome of the strike would be a revolution which would enable them to seize power and enforce peace." However, "we [leaders of Social-Democracy] had wanted the strike as a great revolutionary demonstration. We did not want to intensify the strike until it merged into revolution," Bauer wrote.¹

Right-wing leaders (Victor Adler, Karl Renner, Karl Seitz) held a dominant position in the leadership of the Social-Democratic Labour Party of Austria (SAPÖ), which had adopted a Marxist programme 30 years before at Hainfeld; the centrist trend led by Otto Bauer was also very influential. The left wing pinned its hopes on Friedrich Adler (son of Victor), who was in jail. As a protest against the war he had shot the reactionary Prime Minister in 1916 and acquired a reputation of a revolutionary. The "Hainfeld traditions" played an important role in the Party's ideological and political position; the essence of the tradition was "unity at any price". In practice that formula had become a justification of reformists' collaboration with the bourgeoisie and subordination of the revolutionary workers to centrist leaders who made lavish use of radical phraseology.²

Before the war, the SAPÖ's rejection of the principles of internationalism in a multinational country had led to a split along national lines in both the Party and the trade unions. Only in 1918, when the revolutionary movement embraced all nationalities and a break-up of the empire loomed ahead, did Otto Bauer and his supporters discard the traditional formula of "national and cultural autonomy" and recognise the right to self-determination and sovereign independence not only of the Austrians, Hungarians, Poles and Italians, but also of "the nations without a history", his arrogant term for the Czechs, South Slavs, and Ukrainians. Such a belated step, however, could not restore the unity of the multinational working class of Austro-Hungary, disrupted by opportunists.

Only on the third day of the strike, on January 16, did the leaders of the SAPÖ publish a manifesto in which they said that the people no longer wanted to fight Russia and that the Party would support the demand for peace without annexations and indemnities on the basis of self-determination of nations.³ But as before the Party leadership opposed direct non-parliamentary actions of the masses.

The strike, meanwhile, continued to spread, and on January 18

¹ Otto Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution*, London, 1925, pp. 34, 36.

² Arnold Reisberg, *Februar 1934. Hintergründe und Folgen*, Globus Verlag, Vienna, 1974, pp. 65-66, 70, 89-90.

³ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, January 16, 1918.

became general, involving more than 700,000 participants. It spread to the industrial centres of Upper Austria and Styria. In Budapest and its environs more than 150,000 workers stopped work, and the stoppage spread to factories in the Hungarian towns of Pecs, Szeged, Miskolc, Gyar and others. Traffic ceased on the railways. The metal workers displayed the most activity. Strikes engulfed the Brno area in Moravia, Cracow, Lvov, Drogobych, Borislav and Przemyśl in Galicia, and Mukachev and Beregovo in the Carpathians.

The effect of the "Russian example" on the workers was manifested not only in demands for an immediate democratic peace, but also in the first *Workers' Councils* set up in Wiener Neustadt, Vienna and other proletarian centres. The initiators in Austria were Left radicals associated with the Zimmerwald Left, Franz Koritschner, Richard Schüller and Leo Rothziegel, who had already formed an underground Workers' Council in Vienna at the end of December 1917. They were soon joined by a group of soldiers under the leadership of Johannes Wertheim and Senior Lieutenant Egon Erwin Kisch (subsequently a writer), and the Council came to be called the Workers' and Soldiers' Council.¹ In Hungary members of the Revolutionary Socialists, Otto Korvin, Imre Sallai and Gyula Hevesi, advocated the setting up of Workers' Councils. They were being formed as a result of the spontaneous urge of revolutionary workers for self-organisation to defend their interests and as an expression of dissatisfaction with the opportunist leadership of the Social-Democratic Party of Hungary (SDPH) led by Ernő Garami, Zsigmond Kunfi and others. The Social-Democratic leadership at first ignored the Councils, but later, seeing what a potential force they had become, sought to bring them under its own influence.

The fate of the strike was decided in Vienna on January 19, 1918 at a session of the Workers' Council set up by the Social-Democrats. The Party's right-wing leaders used all their eloquence to get it stopped. They called for "prudence", spoke of a danger of military suppression and German occupation, and declared the government to be ready to yield: it allegedly would not permit the peace talks to be broken off, would repudiate conquests in Russia, recognise the independence of Poland, reform the food-rationing system and introduce local self-government. The workers, Karl Seitz said, "standing with arms ordered" would keep an eye on these promises being implemented. The decision to end the strike, adopted toward morning, was received by the workers with indignation. "Betrayed and Sold Out" was how the Left radicals' leaflet was headed. In many enterprises work was only resumed several days later.

¹ Hans Hautmann, *Die verlorene Räterepublik. Am Beispiel der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschösterreichs*, Europa Verlag, Vienna, 1971, pp. 47-48.

In Bohemia the leadership of the Czech Social-Democrats under the pressure of the masses called a general strike on January 22. Tens of thousands of workers took part in the demonstrations held in those days in various towns. The Social-Democratic leaders of Slovenia and Croatia succeeded in preventing the workers from joining the strike.

The uprising of the sailors of the Austro-Hungarian Navy stationed in the Adriatic port of Cattaro was a direct continuation and in a certain sense the culmination of the strike. On February 1, the sailors of the cruiser *St. Georg* hoisted a red flag. They were supported by 6,000 seamen on nearly 40 other ships, and the workers of the naval arsenal. For three days the insurgents had half of the Austro-Hungarian Navy in their hands. The Central Sailors' Council of ship representatives demanded an immediate general peace without annexations, and the right of nations to self-determination. The command called German submarines from Pola and Rear-Admiral Horthy's squadron. The coast artillery shelled the insurgent ships. The movement was suppressed. Four of its leaders (a Czech, a Slovene, and two Croatians) were shot on February 11, and around 800 sailors were jailed.¹ One of the condemned, Franz Rasch said before execution: "What happened in Russia emboldened us. Over there a new sun has risen that will shine not only for the Slavs but for all the nations, and it will bring them peace and justice."²

When the strike in Austro-Hungary was already on the wane the working class of *Germany* rose to fight. The annexationist demands of the military at Brest had aroused general resentment. A meeting of the revolutionary shopstewards in Berlin (mainly metal workers) resolved to begin a general political strike on January 28, 1918. Already on the first day 400,000 downed tools in the munitions works. The strike spread to Hamburg, Bremen, Kiel, the industrial Ruhr and other centres. Soon more than a million proletarians were on strike in 50 towns. The revolutionary shopstewards of Berlin formed a Workers' Council of Greater Berlin of 414 persons, which put forward a demand for the immediate conclusion of peace without annexations and indemnities on the basis of self-determination of nations. The strikers also wanted representatives of the workers of all countries to take part in the peace negotiations, an amnesty for political prisoners, abolition of the military dictatorship and lifting of the state of emergency, and an improvement in food supplies.

¹ Eva Priester, "Die Matrosen von Cattaro", *Weg und Ziel*, March 1955, No. 3, pp. 218-32; Bruno Frei, *Die roten Matrosen von Cattaro. Eine Episode aus dem Revolutionsjahre 1918*, Vienna, 1927.

² Bruno Frei, "Cattaro heute", *Die Weltbühne*, February 1, 1956, No. 5, p. 152.

In defiance of a ban, big meetings and demonstrations were held in Berlin on January 30 and 31. There were clashes with the police in the proletarian districts, and barricades were erected in some places. The government replied with severe repressive measures. The state of emergency was made stiffer, the biggest enterprises were put under military control, the Workers' Councils were declared disbanded, mass arrests began followed by courts-martial.

The working class was not ready for organised resistance. Many sections trusted the right-wing leaders of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and the free trade unions (Friedrich Ebert, Philipp Scheidemann, Eduard David, Carl Legien and others), and these joined the Action Committee set up by the strikers with the direct purpose of disorganising the strike and frustrating the struggle. (Subsequently, Ebert and Scheidemann congratulated themselves on that.¹) The Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany (USPD), formed in the spring of 1917, was under the influence of centrist leaders (Hugo Haase, Karl Kautsky and Eduard Bernstein). While opposing the frankly chauvinist policy of the right-wing leaders of the SPD, criticising the latter's fawning on the bourgeoisie and the military, issuing pacifist slogans and employing revolutionary phraseology, the centrists, however, considered real action premature. The shopstewards who listened to them therefore were wavering and indecisive.

The USPD also incorporated the Spartacus Group. It was led by prominent revolutionaries—Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring and Clara Zetkin. In opposition to the reformists and conciliators, the Spartacists put forward a truly revolutionary action programme. In the underground *Spartacus Letter* in January 1918, Rosa Luxemburg wrote: "General peace cannot be obtained without an overthrow of the prevailing authority in Germany. Only with the torch of the revolution, only in open mass struggle for political power, for people's rule and a republic in Germany, can a new outburst of national murder and the triumph of German annexationists in East and West be prevented. German workers are now called upon to carry the message of the revolution and peace from the East to the West."²

The Spartacists called on the workers to draw "their brethren in soldier greatcoats" to their side, to "talk Russian" to the reactionaries, to set up Workers' Councils everywhere "on the Russian and Austro-Hungarian model", and not to let "government Socialists" into leadership of the strike because these "wolves in sheep's cloth-

¹ K. Brammer, (Ed.), *Der Prozess des Reichspräsidenten*, Berlin, 1925, pp. 21-22, 47, 68-69, 83, 89.

² *Spartakusbriege*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1958, pp. 410-11.

ing" represented a great danger for the movement.¹ But the Spartacists were not sufficiently influential among the masses to have a decisive impact on the course of events.

The right-wing Social-Democratic leaders and the leaders of the trade unions started to negotiate with the government and the military command, who were moving loyal troops to the capital. The resistance of the disorganised workers was broken, and on February 4 they returned to work. Nearly 50,000 militants were sent to the trenches.

The January political strikes of the Austro-Hungarian and German proletariat, though unprecedented in scale and strength in wartime, did not develop into a revolution. But, as Lenin commented, these powerful explosions manifested "the attraction of the Russian Revolution".² They were evidence of the maturing of a *revolutionary situation* in the centre of Europe: the "lower strata" no longer wanted to live in the old way, while it was becoming increasingly difficult for those at the top, even with the help of Social-Democratic leaders, to hold the masses down and to preserve "patriotic fervour" and unwavering faith in the capacity of the Hapsburg and Hohenzollern regimes to lead their countries to a "victorious peace".

There was a certain decline in the activity of the masses in Germany in the summer because of the repression and the revival of jingoism as a result of the occupation of broad areas of Russia and the Ukraine (propaganda called this the "bread peace") and major offensives on the Western Front. But the decline did not last long, because the partial military successes did not bring peace any nearer, the economic situation deteriorated and food rations were again reduced.

In Austro-Hungary anti-war actions did not cease. The working class marched in the van of the movement. Strikes, though isolated, but often massive and almost always stubborn, continued in Istria, Vienna, Lvov, Styria, in the Slanske-Kladno and Ostrava-Karviná coalfields, in Czech Pardubice, Prague, Budapest and Transylvanian Reșița. Troops were sent in, but the army itself was rapidly disintegrating and desertions were fast increasing. In Galicia, Bohemia and the Carpathians peasants took to arms.

In May 1918 the bread ration was "temporarily" halved. Disorders followed. In June the workers of the biggest factories in Vienna and Lower Austria again downed tools. The Workers' Council of Vienna resumed activity and demanded immediate negotiations for a peace without annexations and indemnities. At almost the same time the

¹ Walter Bartel, "Der Januarstreik 1918 in Berlin", *Revolutionäre Ereignisse und Probleme in Deutschland während der Periode der Grossen Sozialistischen Oktoberrevolution 1917/1918*, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin, 1957, pp. 155, 168-69.

² V.I. Lenin, "Report Delivered at a Moscow Gubernia Conference of Factory Committees, July 23, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 546.

metal workers of Budapest went on strike. The gendarmes killed several workers, and the strike became general. The next day it spread to the whole country, paralysing production and transport. On June 22 a Workers' Council was set up in Budapest, but right-wing Social-Democrats took the lead in it. They called for an ending of the struggle rather than its continuation. The strike ended a week later, and the authorities dealt with the workers severely. In army units where Southern Slav soldiers predominated, unrest and desertions increased. The deserters often went to their home parts and formed armed bands there.

In the eastern regions of *Romania*, which had not come under German occupation, the revolutionary upsurge was quite marked. Joint actions of the working people of the Ukraine and border regions of Romania took place, the peasants of Moldova carried on a struggle, and the railwaymen went on strike. In January 1918 sailors of the Romanian Navy and merchant marine stationed in Black Sea ports rebelled. The ruling upper crust, seized by fear of revolution, hastened to conclude an armistice with Germany and Austro-Hungary, and then threw their forces into suppression of the revolutionary movement of the working people and revolutionary soldiers.

At the beginning of 1918, in spite of repeated protests by the Government of Soviet Russia, the Romanian Royal Army invaded Bessarabia and suppressed the socialist revolution there by force of arms. The revolutionary wing of the Romanian Socialists opposed the seizure of Bessarabia. In an appeal to Romanian soldiers in February 1918 they wrote: "You have been dragged into a fratricidal war in which the freedom won by the people of Bessarabia arms in hand under the banner of the Russian Revolution has been smothered... Turn your weapons against those who are forcing you to shed the blood of our Bessarabian brothers!"¹

In the Entente countries the war was a heavy burden on the shoulders of the working people; casualties increased continuously, human resources were being depleted, real wages were falling, labour productivity declined and so did consumption.

In *France* the social armistice concluded by the social-chauvinists with the bourgeoisie had begun to show cracks. The new Prime Minister Clemenceau proclaimed: "My programme? The war naturally! ... Intensification of the war.... My plans? To win! ... Nothing but the war."² In late 1917 and early 1918 France was swept by a wave of strikes that also hit the munitions industry. Economic demands were mixed with political ones. In December 1917 the metal workers of the Loire basin protested against political repres-

¹ *Dokumente din istoria Partidului Comunist din România. 1917-1922*, Bucharest, 1956, p. 38.

² Georges Clemenceau, *Discours de guerre*, Paris, 1934, p. 160.

sion, expressed solidarity with the Russian Revolution, and demanded peace immediately. All munitions works were at a standstill, the mining of coal, steel production and electricity supplies stopped, and red flags appeared. The government was forced to make partial concessions.

In the spring of 1918 the workers of the aircraft factories in Paris and Suresnes, the artillery works in Clichy, the arsenal in Brest, the munitions factories in Audincourt and Nan-Bairre, engineering, steel and textile workers struck. Time and again, the government used troops against the workers and sent strikers to the trenches. The shop delegates, with whose help the right-wing Socialist leaders hoped to hold back the growth of revolutionary moods, themselves often became spokesmen of these sentiments.

In the middle of May the Renault Works in Billancourt stopped and 250,000 Parisian workers went on strike. The speakers at meetings protested against the war, and proclaimed: "Long Live the Revolution!" and "War on the War!" Troops were sent in but they began to fraternise with the workers and, according to Inessa Armand's eye-witness account, "there was a moment when the command of the French Army was afraid it would not cope with the movement."¹ The proletarians of the Loire basin called a solidarity strike. For 10 days they controlled the area, forcing the municipalities to take on the organisation of food supplies. The government moved reliable troops to St. Etienne and other towns but they were not always suitable for the job of punitive expeditions. Women workers lay down on the rails to prevent the dispatching of trainloads of mobilised men to the front. In the summer several strikes culminated in clashes between workers and soldiers.

The social chauvinists Pierre Renaudel and Albert Thomas, and the reformist leaders of the biggest trade union centre, the General Confederation of Labour (CGT) headed by Léon Jouhaux, tried to continue the policy of "L'Union sacrée", supported the government's war effort and directly helped suppress mass actions. But the opportunities of this collaborationist policy were shrinking, and opposition was mounting among Socialists. The St. Denis Congress of the Socialist youth movement went on record in the summer of 1918 for resolute, unswerving fidelity to the principles of socialism and internationalism.

The sharpening of the class struggle in France heightened the activity of the revolutionary syndicalists who formed an opposition minority in the CGT. In May 1918 they held their own congress in St. Etienne, at which they came out in support of the strike move-

¹ E. Blonina (Inessa Armand), "Perspectives of the Revolution in France", *The Communist International*, No. 3, 1919, p. 333 (in Russian).

ment and set up a Trade Union Defence Committee. Having forced the leaders of the CGT to convene a national trade union congress in July, the syndicalists gave battle to the reformist leaders at it. Gaston Monmousseau demanded no more collaboration with the government and support for the conclusion of peace on the terms proposed by Soviet Russia. Although a compromising resolution was passed, the revolutionary minority strengthened their position in the unions.

At the 15th Congress of the French Socialist Party (SFIO), held in Paris in October 1918, the right-wing leaders suffered defeat. A great impression was made on the delegates by a letter from Captain Jacques Sadoul, a member of the French military mission in Russia. It was addressed to Romain Rolland and read out at the congress by Jean Longuet. An eye-witness of events, Sadoul was convinced of the justice of the October Revolution and that the whole people supported the decrees of the Soviet Government and the Bolsheviks' policy. He condemned the Entente's intervention and made historical parallels: "In 1789 the peoples of Europe took the side of the French Revolution against their governments. In 1918 the proletarians of France should know how to defend the Russian Revolution against the blows of imperialism and world capitalism, a Revolution whose prodigious efforts are hastening the blessed hour of emancipation for the workers of the world."¹ Longuet's supporters, while coming out in principle in favour of revolutionary actions in the name of socialism, at the same time declared them to be premature. Although the right wing retained an influential position, leadership shifted to the centrists, and Frossard was elected General Secretary of the Party. The left wing, grouped around the Committee for the Restoration of International Relations, vigorously insisted on pursuing a revolutionary policy. It was of great significance that Marcel Cachin became editor-in-chief of *L'Humanité*.

For Italy involvement in the war was linked with ever greater economic and political upheavals. The animation in war industry was accompanied with a decline in the traditional industries. In 1918 the economic dislocation became markedly worse. Railway and marine transport could not cope with the traffic, agriculture was suffering from the mobilisation and lack of hands. The shortages of fuel, raw materials and food were acute. Prices rose and profiteering and unemployment were mounting.

Giovanni Germanetto, who took part in the labour movement, recalled: "The winter was terrible. The Spanish flu reaped an incredible number of victims. ...The women standing in long queues in

¹ Jacques Sadoul, *Notes sur la révolution bolchévique*, Paris, 1919, p. 441.

front of the shops, loudly cursed the war... 'Got to finish with it', 'Got to do like Russia!', 'We'll also get a Lenin!'.¹

After the disaster at Caporetto which shocked the whole country there was further repression of the workers in the industrial triangle Milan-Genoa-Turin, and also Rome, Naples and other cities swept by dissatisfaction with the war and privations. The peasant actions in Southern Italy where they were demanding partition of the big estates were brutally suppressed. In 1918 the number of strikes fell somewhat compared with the previous year (313 against 477, according to the official figures), but the strikers' tenacity increased.²

There were important shifts within the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) under the impact of the revolutionary events. It was the only one of the West European parties of the Second International that had not voted for war credits. Before the war the Anarchosyndicalists had been expelled, and later the overt chauvinists, Freemasons and, in November 1914, the leader of the interventionists (supporting Italy's joining the war on the side of the Entente) and editor-in-chief of *Avanti!*, Benito Mussolini. A social-pacifist trend predominated in the PSI, whose attitude to the war had been expressed in 1915 by the formula "neither support nor sabotage". After the Russian Revolution rifts intensified within the Party. The right wing headed by Filippo Turati and Claudio Trèves became more and more openly chauvinist and supported demands for a "correction of frontiers". On the other hand, a left wing took shape that called itself the Revolutionary Faction of Irreconcilables. The centrist leadership of the Party (Constantino Lazzari and Giacinto Menotti Serrati) took part in a meeting in Florence in November 1917 along with the leftists (Egidio Gennari, Amadeo Bordiga and Antonio Gramsci). The resolution passed by the meeting spoke of the fight against the war and of revolutionary winning of power, but no concrete plan of revolutionary actions was worked out.³ At the beginning of 1918 Lazzari, and then Serrati, too, were arrested.

A sharp struggle developed at the 15th Congress of the PSI in Rome in September 1918. In a message from prison Lazzari called on the delegates "not to forget what was happening in Russia". A majority supported the resolution of the leftists who now called themselves Maximalists; it condemned the Party leadership for "excessive tolerance" of reformists, without proposing, however, to expel them. Gennari's resolution described the war as imperialist, rejected co-operation with the bourgeoisie and recommended an

¹ G. Germanetto, *Memorie di un barbiere*, Rome, 1949, pp. 124-25.

² *Annuario statistico del lavoro*, Rome, 1949, p. 384.

³ P. Spriano, *Torino operaia nella grande guerra (1914-1918)*, Turin, 1960, pp. 281-85.

increase in anti-war propaganda.¹ The resolutions of the congress were evidence both of a leftward swing in the Party and of its left-of-centre leadership not venturing to break with the reformists. Certain shifts occurred in the unions, too. But Ludovico D'Aragona, who led the Secretariat of the General Confederation of Labour (CGL), the most influential trade union organisation, around 250,000 members strong and associated with the PSI by the Pact of Rome on unity of action, ensured the continuance of the reformist trend in the activity of the union leadership. The Italian labour movement approached the end of the war though with surging revolutionary moods, but without a clear revolutionary programme or a resolute revolutionary leadership.

In *Great Britain* the class struggle sharpened noticeably towards the end of the war. While 872,000 workers had taken part in 730 strikes in 1917 (over three times as many as in 1916), there were 1,165 strikes in 1918 involving 1,116,000 workers, with 5,875,000 man-days lost.² Membership of the trade unions grew considerably—from 4 million in 1913 to 6.5 million in 1918. The influence of the National Shop Stewards' and Workers' Committee Movement, founded in 1916, increased. It proclaimed its aim—socialisation of the basic means of production and the establishment of workers' control in enterprises. The shop stewards' and workers' committees were often the initiators and leaders of strikes. One of the main centres of the movement was the Scottish industrial area of the Clyde,³ where the most popular revolutionary leaders were John MacLean, William Gallacher and Arthur MacManus.

British workers enthusiastically greeted the October Revolution. The delegates at the Labour Conference in Nottingham in January 1918, displayed great sympathy with Soviet Russia. They applauded the representative of the Soviet Government Maxim Litvinov who told the conference about the policies of the Bolsheviks.

Speakers at a big demonstration in London on January 27, 1918 called for international solidarity against imperialism and for a general strike if the government did not stop supplementary conscription. Dissatisfaction was spreading in the Army and Navy. In 1918 courts martial condemned 678 persons for acts of insubordination, 3 times as many as in the preceding year, and 11 times as many as in 1916.⁴

¹ P. Spriano, *op. cit.*, pp. 307-09; *II Partito Socialista Italiano nei suoi Congressi*, Vol. III, Milan, 1963, pp. 38-42.

² *Eighteenth Abstract of Labour Statistics of the United Kingdom*, London, 1927, pp. 144-45.

³ W. Gallacher, *Revolt on the Clyde. An Autobiography*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1936, pp. 174-84.

⁴ Tom Bell, *The British Communist Party. A Short History*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1937, p. 37.

The growth of militancy among British workers led to a considerable shift to the left in the whole British labour movement. A large part of the working class was freed from the direct influence of the capitalists and their political conceptions and organisations, and tied its hopes to the Labour Party, whose membership was over 3 million in 1918 (an increase of more than a million compared with prewar). At the Labour Party Conference in February 1918 a new constitution was adopted in which the Party's aim was first proclaimed (though indirectly) to be socialism.¹ The Constitution also provided for an organisational restructuring of the Party, converting it from a loose federation of affiliated bodies into an organisation with a more precise structure. Individual membership was introduced for the first time.

Labour's programme was formulated in the document *Labour and the New Social Order* adopted in June 1918. In the realm of politics this first labour programme envisaged the lifting of all the restrictions on freedom of speech, the press, choice of domicile and work, imposed during the war. It called for universal suffrage and abolition of the House of Lords. In the economic sphere the Party stood for nationalisation of the railways, coal mines and power stations, and, in favourable situation, of the land.² Adoption of the new Constitution and first programme was the completion of the long, complicated process of the Labour Party's transition from radical liberalism to reformism of a Social-Democratic type.

In the *United States of America* the workers' anti-war struggle had already begun when the country was gradually passing from the role of supplier of the Entente to one of direct involvement in military operations. All the healthy forces of the American labour movement, above all the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the left wing of the Socialist Party of America (SPA), developed active internationalist and anti-war propaganda in opposition to President Wilson's line on US intervention in the world conflict "to make the world safe for democracy". Their campaign evoked a broad response among the masses, in spite of the ferocious resistance of the leadership of the American Federation of Labor (AF of L) headed by Samuel Gompers, who were striving to impose the idea of class collaboration on the labour movement and to subordinate it completely to the imperialist interests of US monopoly capital which was openly making claims to hegemony in world affairs.

The war prodigiously enriched the American monopolies and

¹ *Report of the Seventeenth Annual Conference of the Labour Party, Nottingham and London, 1918*, The Labour Party, London, 1918.

² *Labour and the New Social Order. A Report on Reconstruction*, London, 1918, pp. 10-11.

speeded up the concentration of capital. By its end there were 42,554 millionaires in the USA, 1 per cent of the population owned more than half of the nation's wealth.¹ The position of the workers, especially of the unskilled, deteriorated, though not so much as in Europe. The working week was more than 50 hours, and while wages rose by 55 per cent, the cost of living went up by 104 per cent.²

Taking advantage of the political weakness of the working class and endeavouring to prevent its radicalisation, the bourgeoisie of the USA took especially harsh measures against any display of revolutionary moods and growth of the strike struggle. Mass arrests were an everyday phenomena. In the war years the proletarian poet Joe Hill was executed and the trade union militants Tom Mooney and Warren Billings, who adopted class-conscious and anti-war positions, were sentenced to death on trumped-up charges. In the autumn of 1917, the IWW unions, which had courageously declared their anti-war stand and led a number of strikes, were smashed.

The trial of 101 leaders headed by William Haywood, which began in Chicago on April 1, 1918, lasted nearly 5 months. They were charged with conspiracy, sabotage of the war effort and resisting conscription. The chief defendants, Bill Haywood included, were sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment each. Eugene Debs, a veteran of the labour movement who made resounding anti-war speeches, was threatened with violence, even lynching. On June 16, 1918, Debs addressed a meeting in Canton, Ohio, with a striking speech against the war and in defence of Soviet Russia and the political prisoners in American jails. "Yes, in good time we are going to sweep into power in this nation and throughout the world," he said. "We are going to destroy all enslaving and degrading capitalist institutions and re-create them as free and humanizing institutions. The world is daily changing before our eyes. The sun of capitalism is setting; the sun of Socialism is rising."³ That speech earned Debs, charged with treason, a sentence of ten years in prison.

But no repressions succeeded in holding back the convergence of the mass labour movement and socialism. It was impossible either to eliminate the objective conditions generating class antagonisms and conflicts or to isolate the American proletariat from the effect of the ideas of the Russian Revolution and the influence of the European labour movement. A whole number of young revolutionaries joining the struggle boldly challenged reaction and the capitula-

¹ William Z. Foster, *Outline Political History of the Americas*, International Publishers, New York, 1951, pp. 363, 364.

² Anthony Bimba, *The History of the American Working Class*, International Publishers, New York, 1927, p. 266.

³ *Writings and Speeches of Eugene V. Debs*, Hermitage Press, Inc., New York, 1948, p. 433.

lation of the right wing and centre in the socialist movement. In very difficult conditions they carried the truth about the world's first victorious socialist revolution to the masses. More than once the police confiscated the materials John Reed brought in, yet he managed to finish his book *Ten Days that Shook the World*. With difficulty he got it published in New York, and wrote in the preface: "This book is a slice of intensified history—history as I saw it. ...It is undeniable that the Russian Revolution is one of the great events of human history, and the rise of the Bolsheviki a phenomenon of world-wide importance."¹

In *Japan* the tempestuous development of capitalism in the war years considerably expanded all industries, including heavy industry (electrical engineering, steel and mechanical engineering), and also the commercial and banking systems. There was a substantial shift in the social and class structure of society, which aggravated its internal contradictions. At the end of the war the working class numbered 2.5 million, becoming an imposing independent force. Its composition, too, had changed. Whereas 60 per cent of the labour force had previously consisted of village girls employed as seasonal workers in light industries (mainly in textiles), a stratum of skilled male industrial workers cut off from rural life had now built up.

The differentiation of the peasantry intensified. The ruined peasant proprietor was being converted into a tenant or semi-tenant farmer. The fight of the landowners with the tenants and the peasantry as a whole sharpened. A numerous stratum of white-collar workers and intelligentsia built up, which became the social basis of a liberal and bourgeois-democratic movement that opposed the feudal landlord system and the monopoly capitalists.

The Japanese capitalists and landowners in pursuit of the bigger incomes from the high economic activity caused by the war carried exploitation and fleecing of the masses to the extreme. Because of inflation, workers' incomes lagged greatly behind the growth of prices for prime necessities. Hard living and working conditions pushed them onto the road of economic struggle, awakening class consciousness and stimulating organisation and unity. In this situation the revolutionary events in Russia found a lively response among the working people of Japan who knew the heavy yoke of absolutism, semi-feudal landlords and monopoly capital.

In the spring of 1918 the Japanese Government despatched interventionist troops to Russia. Great stocks of rice were required for them. The big rice merchants, taking advantage of that, conspired with the big landowners to store rice and artificially raise its price.

¹ John Reed, *Ten Days that Shook the World*, The Modern Library, New York, 1935, pp. vii-xii.

The masses' cup of patience overflowed, and the country was swept by a wave of rice riots.

At the end of July 1918 the wives of fishermen in a small settlement in the Toyama Prefecture demonstrated demanding rice. News of this "women's rebellion" instantly swept the country. Crowds gathered in the poor quarters, demanding reduction of the price of rice and payment of subsidies. With the authorities reluctant to respond, the enraged people surged into the central areas, burning and destroying the warehouses and homes of rich rice merchants and big factory owners, and police stations.

Such actions occurred in 43 prefectures and 37 cities (including Kobe, Osaka, Kyoto, Tokyo, Nagoya, Hiroshima, and Okayama). The movement spread to many factories, where the workers stopped work demanding pay increases and often resorting to destruction of equipment and other violent actions. Almost a quarter of the adult population took part in the unrest, mainly small traders, artisans, day labourers, petty clerks, and factory workers, miners, peasants, tenant farmers, fishermen and the slum dwellers suffering from caste discrimination. The cabinet of Seiki Terauchi had to resign. Sen Katayama wrote later: "This movement, which was the starting point of the present revolutionary movement in Japan, was born on the crest of the wave caused by the October Revolution."¹

The rice riots, which occurred at a time when the working class of Japan still did not have its own revolutionary party, were brutally suppressed by the authorities. But they roused the broad masses of the workers, and furthered growth of proletarian class consciousness. As *Pravda* wrote at the time, "The crowd today, still blindly helpless, smashes windows in rich houses of the capital of Japan, ransacks the editorial offices of bellicose newspapers and rice dealers; tomorrow it will seek out those who are guilty of its hunger, tomorrow in the arsenal of the West European and, especially, Russian revolution it will find weapons for successful struggle against these culprits."²

In *Scandinavian countries*, which at the end of the war suffered from the blockade declared by the Entente and the food difficulties connected with it, the labour movement was markedly radicalised. In spite of the efforts of the traditionally reformist Social-Democratic Parties, the strike struggle against the cost of living, profiteering and indigence expanded. Whereas there were around 1,800 industrial conflicts in Sweden in 1917, the next year the number was nearly 3,000.³ In Denmark, 75 strikes were recorded in 1916 and 504 in

¹ *Pravda*, November 7, 1933.

² *Pravda*, August 23, 1918.

³ J. Segall, *The Labour Movement in Scandinavian Countries*, Moscow, 1927, pp. 58-59 (in Russian).

1919.¹ The demands for social and political reforms included an eight-hour day, the institution of universal suffrage (in Sweden) and improvements in the suffrage (in Norway). The Swedish Left Social-Democrats fought for a republic with a single-chamber Parliament.

A new phenomenon in the proletarian movement of Scandinavia was an unusually strong tendency among workers for spontaneous action and the establishment of worker power, which reflected the instinctive striving of the working class for an ideological and political break with the bourgeoisie. But the revolutionary pressure of the masses inevitably came up against resistance by right-wing Social-Democratic leaders who recognised only parliamentary means of struggle.

In April 1917 food riots broke out in the Swedish town of Väster-vik, which came to be known as the "potato revolution". The workers set up a committee that organised a check of the town's food stocks. These events triggered off a wave of meetings, strikes, petitions and requisitioning of food stocks across the country. The demonstrators often demanded universal suffrage and freedom for political prisoners. Workers' committees were set up in many towns. On April 24, during a demonstration in Stockholm, soldiers expressed solidarity with the fight of the working class. Left Socialists founded a Swedish Alliance of Workers and Soldiers, which published several issues of the newspaper *Frihets Flammen*. "One can say with confidence that in late April and early May all the Swedish defence forces were in a state of alert," a Swedish historian writes.² On June 6, 30,000 persons gathered by the building of the Riksdag in Stockholm, demanding parliamentary reform. Many were injured and arrested in clashes with the police. The Left Social-Democrats called it "the first real day of class struggle".³ The Social-Democratic leaders exerted great efforts to prevent the building of barricades.

The wave of revolutionary upsurge brought about a rift in the Social-Democratic Party of Sweden, whose head Hjalmar Branting soon became a minister in a coalition government. In May 1917 the Social-Democratic Left Party was formed from the Social-Democratic Youth League and the left wing of the Swedish Social-Democratic Party. The new party was based on individual membership and laid stress on revolutionary action by the popular masses.

In Norway an upsurge in the movement of the working people also began in the spring of 1917. On June 6, 1917 the first general strike in the country's history took place in protest against profiteering and the high cost of living. The government was forced to promise

¹ J. Nørlund, *Det knageri samfundets fuger og bånd*, Copenhagen, 1966, p. 97.

² C.G. Andrea, "Regeringen Swartz och den svenska revolutionen", *Historisk Tidskrift*, 1976, No. 3, p. 318.

³ *Social-Demokraten*, June 7, 1917.

to meet the workers' demands, and assigned 84 million kroner to fight the high cost of living.¹

In December 1917 the first Workers' Councils arose spontaneously in Oslo, based on the trade unions of the metal and foundry workers. Later they emerged all over the country and in February 1918 their membership reached 60,000.² While the right-wing leadership of the Norwegian Labour Party and the unions dissociated themselves from the Councils, the Social-Democratic Youth League in its programme adopted on the eve of 1918, called them "revolutionary organs of the working class" and demanded transfer of all power to them.³

Organised and unorganised workers, small peasants, women and young people took part in the movement of Workers' Councils. The biggest organisation was the Workers' Council of Kristiania, which united around 22,000 persons. At the beginning of March 1918 it issued a manifesto in which it said that the workers' demands could not be realised "by parliamentary means but only through *revolutionary mass action* of all the working people".⁴ On March 5 a demonstration, the biggest in the Norwegian capital's history, was held by the Storting building.

In March 1918, Workers' Councils held a national conference which adopted a common programme. It demanded public control over production and the distribution of the output, and effective measures against the high cost of living, including the requisitioning of food stocks and their sale at fixed prices under the control of workers' committees, an eight-hour working day, public works as a means of combating unemployment, demobilisation of the army, and the conversion of war industries to the peaceful needs.⁵ This conference proved to be the peak of the movement's development. The stand taken by the right wing in the Norwegian Labour Party weakened the Councils, and at the end of 1918 they dissolved themselves. However, as a Norwegian historian has noted, the council movement "left a powerful ideological legacy in Norwegian socialist thinking".⁶

The upsurge of the labour movement that began in most capitalist countries in the first months after the Russian Revolution was above all evidence of the correctness of the Bolsheviks' anticipations that the triumph of revolution in Russia would give a powerful impetus to the international anti-war and social struggle. At the same time the October Revolution and the ensuing revolutionary wave evoked

¹ E. Bull. *Arbeiderbevaegelsens stilling i de tre nordiske land 1914-1920*, Kristiania, 1922, p. 30.

² *Norsk sosialisme. En dokumentasjon*, Oslo, 1970, p. 42.

³ *Norges kommunistiske partis historie*, Vol. 1, Oslo, 1963, p. 81.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁵ *Norsk sosialisme*, p. 51.

⁶ Knut Langfeldt, *Det direkte demokrati*, Oslo, 1966, p. 41.

a backlash mobilisation of all the forces of the old world in an effort to halt the workers' offensive and to postpone the overthrow of capitalism. Attempts to disunite the labour movement, to sow distrust of socialism in general and its first practical experience in particular, played an increasingly important part in the policies of the enemies of socialism and the revolution.

THE RUSSIAN EXPERIENCE AND SOCIAL DEMOCRACY IN OTHER COUNTRIES

When Lenin analysed the October Revolution as the first step in the international revolution, he insisted that its experience should be publicised not by slogans and general declarations, but, rather, "We must show the European workers exactly what we have set about, how we have set about it, how it is to be understood; that will bring them face to face with the question of how socialism is to be achieved." He advised against exaggerating the achievements. What was needed was objective facts showing what had already been done and what remained to be done. Then the European proletariat would see that, as he put it, "such-and-such things the Russians are doing badly but we shall do them better. When this urge reaches the masses, the socialist revolution will be invincible."¹

Lenin cautioned against oversimplification and running ahead: "We have only just taken the first steps towards shaking off capitalism altogether and beginning the transition to socialism. We do not know and we cannot know how many stages of transition there will be. That depends on when the full-scale European socialist revolution begins and on whether it will deal with its enemies and enter upon the smooth path of socialist development easily and rapidly or whether it will do so slowly."² Since the transition was made more complicated in Russia by some specific features that did not exist in the West, he suggested stressing the generally significant in the revolution rather than specific national stages that might not be necessary in Europe.

At that time, authentic information about Soviet Russia was extremely scanty in Europe and America, while bourgeois propaganda lied about it in a thousand voices. Lenin was therefore sincerely glad when through the mediation of the old Bolshevik M. M. Borodin he got the chance to send an open letter to American workers. The letter was taken to the USA by P. I. Travin (Sletov), published

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the R.C.P. (B.), March 6-8, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 134, 137.

² *Ibid.*, p. 131.

at the end of 1918 in the left-wing journals *The Class Struggle* and *The Revolutionary Age* and reprinted many times in the USA and Western Europe. In it Lenin explained his view of the significance of Russian experience for workers in other countries. Refuting the allegations that the Bolsheviks were to blame for the "chaos of the revolution", the "destruction of industry" and food shortage, "terror", and suppression of democracy, he recalled that in the 18th-century revolutionary War of Independence in North America, in the Civil War in the USA, in England in 1649, and in France in 1793, the class struggle had taken the "form of *civil war*, and civil war is inconceivable without the severest destruction... and the restriction of formal democracy in the interests of this war."

Considering the power of the Soviets, a new, higher *type* of democracy, as the main thing in Russia's revolutionary experience, Lenin stressed: "The combination of the proletarian dictatorship with the new democracy for the working people—of civil war with the widest participation of the people in politics—such a combination cannot be brought about at one stroke, nor does it fit in with the outworn modes of routine parliamentary democracy." Mistakes are bound to occur here, for "people have not become saints because the revolution has begun. The toiling classes who for centuries have been oppressed, downtrodden, and forcibly held in the vice of poverty, brutality and ignorance cannot avoid mistakes when making a revolution." However, every mistake of the millions of workers and peasants who for the first time in history have begun themselves to build a new life, "every such mistake is worth thousands and millions of 'flawless' successes achieved by the exploiting minority.... For only *through* such mistakes will the workers and peasants *learn* to build the new life, learn to do *without* capitalists; only in this way will they hack a path for themselves—through thousands of obstacles—to victorious socialism."

The fact that Soviet Russia was the first country "to break the convict chains of the imperialist war" entailed enormous sacrifices on its part. Wrote Lenin: "We are now, as it were, in a besieged fortress, waiting for the other detachments of the world socialist revolution to come to our relief." He had a realistic view of the situation and repeated what he had written at the time of Brest: "We are banking on the inevitability of the world revolution but this does not mean that we are such fools as to bank on the revolution inevitably coming on a *definite* and early date." Help from American workers, he considered, would "probably not come soon ... for the revolution is developing in different countries in different forms and at different tempos (and cannot be otherwise). We know that although the European proletarian revolution has been maturing rapidly lately, it may, after all, not flare up within the next few weeks."

The conclusion was that whatever new calamities struck the Republic of Soviets, it was invincible because each of the imperialists' new blows "rouses more and more sections of the workers and peasants to the struggle, teaches them at the cost of enormous sacrifice, steels them, and engenders new heroism on a mass scale."¹

The truth about the October Revolution and Soviet Russia did reach working people in capitalist countries, and they were eager to learn from Russian revolutionary experience. They were helped in that by the left Socialist Parties and groups, rather small in numbers at the time. The difficulty, however, was that most of the leaders of Social-Democracy in other countries greeted the Russian Revolution, just like the capitalists, with hostility and malice. Their attitude, moreover, was influenced by the position of the governments of the belligerent coalitions; while the right-wing Social-Democrats of the Central Powers strove to exploit Soviet Russia's drive for peace in order to realise the annexationist plans of Germany and Austro-Hungary, the right-wing Socialists of the Entente exerted all their energies to prevent the loss of the ally in war. But all of them, including the centrists like Kautsky, were united in a categorical denial of the value of the experience of the Russian Revolution for the countries of the West.

Kautsky responded to the October Revolution with the article "The Bolshevik Uprising" already on November 15, 1917. In it he argued that the low level of Russia's industrial development made only a bourgeois revolution, not a socialist, possible there.² To be sure, he had written about that earlier, soon after the February Revolution. Rosa Luxemburg had commented on it sarcastically in her letter from prison on April 8, 1917: "Kautsky knows no better, to be sure, than to prove statistically that the social conditions of Russia are not yet ripe for the dictatorship of the proletariat. A worthy theorist of the Independent Socialist Party! He has forgotten that 'statistically' France of 1789 and 1793 was much less ripe for the authority of the bourgeoisie. Fortunately, history hasn't gone according to Kautsky's theoretical recipes for a very long time, so let's hope for the best."³ She referred to this again in a letter to Luise Kautsky of November 24, 1917: "Are you pleased with the Russians? Of course they will not be able to hold out in this witches' Sabbath—not because the statistics show a backward economic development of Russia, as your judicious spouse has reckoned, but because Social-Democracy in the highly developed West consists

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Letter to American Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, 1965, pp. 68-69, 72-74, 75.

² *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, November 15, 1917.

³ Central Party Archive, Institute of Marxism-Leninism, Moscow, Stock 209, File 411, Sheet 20.

of rotten cowards, and will stand idly and let the Russians bleed to death. But such an end is better than 'to stay alive for the Fatherland'; it is an act of world historic significance, the imprint of which will not disappear for eons."¹

Eduard Bernstein, the founding father of revisionism, soon joined Kautsky in attacks on Bolsheviks (during the war he had associated with the centrists out of pacifist considerations). The Russian Menshevik A. Stein, who was living in Germany, also came out as a rabid enemy of the October Revolution. His is the priority credit, incidentally, for starting the slanderous campaign of accusation of anti-democracy, terror, unleashing civil war, etc., against the Bolsheviks in the German press.

In the spring of 1918 Kautsky published the pamphlet *Social-Democratic Notes on the Reconversion Economy* in which he examined the economy of the reconversion from war to peace solely from the standpoint of finding possible ways and means to save capitalist production from upheavals. Because of the decline in the productive forces caused by the war, he said, conditions were very unfavourable for the proletariat to come to power and socialism to be established. "The triumphant proletariat," he wrote, "would find itself in these circumstances in the position of a millionaire's heir who, on checking his legacy, finds that he has only come into a million of debts." Savouring the difficulties the Russian Bolsheviks came up against, he sought to persuade the German workers that "it should therefore not be our aim to come to power in a situation of an economy of reconversion".²

With the publication of his pamphlet *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat* in Vienna in the autumn of 1918, Kautsky became the chief purveyor of theoretical arguments against the Bolsheviks and proletarian revolution in general on an international scale. It was not fortuitous that his pamphlet was greeted with approval not only by the Social-Democratic press, but also by conservative capitalist papers.³

Kautsky claimed that Russia was "not ripe" for socialist revolution, that the revolution would inevitably take the form of civil war in a country where democracy was not sufficiently developed, and that if it tried to go beyond the establishment of democracy it would simply open the way to "dictatorship of the sabre". The conditions for socialist production existed only in those leading industrial

¹ Rosa Luxemburg, *Briefe an Karl und Luise Kautsky (1896-1918)*, Berlin, 1923, p. 193.

² Karl Kautsky, *Sozialdemokratische Bemerkungen zur Übergangswirtschaft*, Leipzig, 1918, pp. 164f, 166.

³ For example, *Vorwärts*, October 21, 1918; *Frankfurter Zeitung*, October 22, 1918.

powers of the West, where the proletariat constituted the majority of the democratically organised nation. But there the proletarian revolution could be carried out not by force, but by "peaceful means" of an economic, legislative, and moral character, so that dictatorship of the proletariat was altogether unnecessary there.¹

Kautsky's ideas coincided in the main with the views of other theorists of Social-Democracy. They all refused to recognise that the beginning of a new historical epoch associated with the first breaking of the capitalist order, inviolable in the capitalist's view, would inevitably be marked by rabid resistance by both the overthrown exploiter classes and those threatened by that overthrow.

Kautsky's Austrian colleague Otto Bauer, though he argued with the right-wing leaders of his party like Karl Renner and Victor Adler on questions of tactics, and especially on the national question, agreed with them in denying any significance of the "Russian example" for Austria. He considered it an achievement of Austrian Social-Democracy that it had been able not only to prevent the January strike of 1918 turning into a revolution but also to maintain unity of the Party on a reformist basis, "[modifying] their attitude to suit the changing sentiments of the masses".²

The French right-wing Socialists headed by Pierre Renaudel and Marcel Sembat became open supporters of anti-Soviet military intervention immediately after the October Revolution. Albert Thomas expressed his attitude in an appeal to the imperialists of the Entente: "Gentlemen of the Government, act quickly!"³ Léon Blum, then at the outset of his career of socialist theoretician and politician, tried to reconcile right and left on a platform of hostility to Marxism and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and later put forward a formula of the "exercise of power".⁴ The Belgian Socialist Emile Vandervelde, chairman of the International Socialist Bureau, in his *Socialism against the State* made sophisticated discourses about the socialist revolution and differentiating between "state power", "organ of authority", and "the state, instrument of one class's domination over another", in order to divert attention from the main point, the proletariat's fight for power, by talk about "transitional stages".⁵

The right-wing leaders and theorists of the British labour and socialist movement Arthur Henderson, Philip Snowden and Sidney Webb approved of the anti-Soviet policy of Lloyd George's govern-

¹ Karl Kautsky, *Die Diktatur des Proletariats*, Vienna, 1918, pp. 25-27, 41, 43.

² Otto Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution*, London, 1925, p. 39.

³ *L'Humanité*, July 8, 1918.

⁴ Léon Blum, *L'Exercice du pouvoir*, Paris, 1937, p. 332.

⁵ Emile Vandervelde, *Le socialisme contre l'Etat*, Paris-Nancy, 1918, pp. 75-76, 89, 156.

ment, furnishing it with calls for "justice". They did not hide their hostility to the revolution, considering the Labour Party "an instrument of practical reforms". Only Ramsay MacDonald allowed himself to flirt sometimes with ideas of the permissibility of a "revolutionary dictatorship" in certain countries (but not in Britain!).¹ The paper of the British Socialist Party *The Call* wrote indignantly that many labour and socialist leaders in Britain were "deaf and dumb" in regard to the measures taken by the Soviet Republic "with courage and intelligence, ushering in the long-yearned-for Socialist order of society".² The leader of the American Federation of Labour, Samuel Gompers, was an even fiercer opponent of socialism, just as of the involvement of labour organisations in politics in general.

Upon reading Kautsky's *Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, Lenin wrote to the Soviet representatives in Berlin, Stockholm and Berne: "Why do we do nothing to fight the *theoretical* vulgarisation of Marxism by Kautsky?" He insistently recommended the German Left to publish a principled criticism. And he also proposed publishing his *The State and Revolution* in German as soon as possible with a special preface against Kautsky.³ Barely recovered from his wound, he immediately set to work on his own critique, which he called *Antikautsky*. In an article for *Pravda* he described Kautsky's book as "a hundred times more disgraceful, outrageous and renegade than Bernstein's notorious *Premises of Socialism*".⁴

In this article, and later in more detail in his pamphlet *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Lenin first of all noted that Kautsky had not given a scientific definition of the dictatorship of the proletariat and ignored the need to suppress the resistance of the exploiters. The forms of the dictatorship might vary, and Soviet power was only one of them. In an addendum to the second edition of *The State and Revolution* Lenin put this idea as follows: "The transition from capitalism to communism is certainly bound to yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms... During this period the state must inevitably be a state that is democratic *in a new way* (for the proletariat and the propertyless in general) and dictatorial *in a new way* (against the bourgeoisie).⁵ The international significance of Soviet power was already shown by the fact that by means of it "the workers and poor peasants, *even* of a backward country, even with the least experience, education

¹ J.R. MacDonald, *Parliament and Revolution*, Manchester, 1919, p. 32.

² *The Call*, December 20, 1917.

³ V.I. Lenin, "To Y.A. Berzin, V.V. Vorovsky and A.A. Joffe", *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, 1976, pp. 362-63.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 105.

⁵ V.I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 417, 418.

and habits of organisation, *have been able* for a whole year, amidst gigantic difficulties, ... to maintain the power of the working people".¹

In reply to Kautsky, who claimed that the Bolsheviks were being insolent in counting on the West's support, that they had "even recalled well-time fine words about the dictatorship of the proletariat" and were "building a whole new theory, claiming universal value for it",² Lenin wrote: "It is obligatory for a Marxist to count on a European revolution if a *revolutionary situation* exists". Before the World War, "the expectation of a revolutionary situation in Europe was not an infatuation of the Bolsheviks, but the *general opinion* of all Marxists". Now the whole nub of the issue was: "Has a revolutionary situation actually come or not?" Kautsky did not pose that question and only facts could give the answer. And they had given an incontestably positive answer: (1) the economic facts—the famine and ruin created everywhere by the war; (2) the political facts—"ever since 1915 a splitting process has been evident in *all* countries ... of *departure of the mass* of the proletariat from the social-chauvinist leaders to the left, to revolutionary ideas and sentiments, to revolutionary leaders."

What were the actions of labour parties and their leaders in these conditions? The Bolsheviks, as true proletarian internationalists, did "the utmost possible in one country *for* the development, support and awakening of the revolution *in all countries*" and thereby provided the genuinely revolutionary and internationalist idea, theory, programme and tactics, which took into account both "the gains of the tranquil epoch and the experience of *the epoch of revolutions, which has begun*". It was in that context, Lenin pointed out, that Bolshevism "*can serve as a model of tactics for all*".³

The majority of the parties of the Second International, however, had not stood the historical test, had replaced class positions by supraclass ones, internationalist ones by chauvinist or pacifist positions, revolutionary by reformist directly hostile to or passively temporising in regard to the imminent revolution. Much of the blame for the fact that the revolution in Europe was late and delayed in coming to the aid of the Russian Revolution, Lenin wrote, lay not on the masses but on "those *leaders* who, like the Scheidemanns and the Kautskys, *failed* in their duty to carry on revolutionary agitation, revolutionary propaganda, revolutionary work among the masses to overcome their inertness, who in fact worked *against* the revolu-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *op. cit.*, p. 293.

² Karl Kautsky, *Die Diktatur des Proletariats*, pp. 20, 60.

³ V.I. Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *op. cit.*, pp. 289-90, 292-93.

tionary instincts and aspirations which are always aglow deep down among the mass of the oppressed class." Not only had Scheidemann betrayed the proletariat and gone over to the bourgeoisie, but Kautsky, too, by his writings "tried to *extinguish* the revolutionary spirit instead of fostering and fanning it".¹

In contrast to the social reformists, the left, revolutionary groups in Europe, above all in Germany, not only warmly welcomed the October Revolution as a *socialist* revolution, but strove to assimilate its experience, above all the experience of the Soviets. Already in November 1917 Clara Zetkin wrote about the need to review "what we've learnt and what we've taught" about "the level of development of society and human beings" necessary for revolution. The formula of the "necessary level" should not be a dead schema; it could draw substance and life only from historical reality.

The events in Russia could not be measured by the yardstick of the countries of the old European culture; it had many aspects of Asia, Europe and America. But the main point was: "Affairs and people are ripe for revolution when broad strata of the people feel a certain situation to be intolerable; when they no longer believe in the will and ability of the superior social powers to remove the intolerable burden from them; when they trust only in their own strength". Evaluating the significance of the alliance of workers and working peasantry, she noted that the Bolsheviks had achieved their aim "in a bold assault without precedent".²

The *Spartacus Letters* at the beginning of January 1918 said that events in Russia had not followed Kautsky's scheme. In an age ripe on the whole for revolution the question of which country would assume the initiative and leadership depended on a combination of many historical circumstances. The Russian proletariat had now become "the vanguard of the world proletariat". Would the European and German workers continue to watch the tense drama benevolently from the distance, and only play the role of watchers over the fence? For an enormous historical responsibility lay on them for the fate of the international revolution.³

Franz Mehring, dissociating himself from Kautsky, showed in the series of articles "The Bolsheviks and Us" in the summer of 1918 that the Russian Soviets were continuing the cause of the Paris Commune. He wrote: "The Soviets are the dictatorship of the proletariat, elastic enough to give all strata of the working classes free play", but that did not hamper the ability of Soviet power "to display such resolve in its revolutionary actions as to surpass in this respect all

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

² Clara Zetkin, *Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften*, Vol. I, Berlin, 1957, pp. 770-75.

³ *Spartakusbriege*, pp. 414-15.

preceding revolutionary governments". This prominent Marxist and biographer of Marx considered that since Marx had enthusiastically greeted the heroism of the Communards of Paris, "one can as easily imagine how he would stand up for the Soviet Government, which has already solved for the vast masses of a great people the problem of how simultaneously to rule and be ruled in a way that has never existed in world history"¹.

The German revolutionaries did not, unfortunately, have the chance to think out many problems of the impending revolution in a thorough way and collectively develop them on the theoretical and political plane. Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were in prison and had only scanty information about the events in Russia. Liebknecht, while highly valuing the significance of the "Russian initiative", did not immediately understand, for example, the Bolsheviks' need to sign the Brest Peace. He feared that the Bolsheviks would prove, against their will, to be prisoners of German imperialism, which would strengthen its position and hold back development of the revolution in Europe. But on the margin of his notes about that he added: "Not for publication! With all reserve—because of disorientation! Only for discussion. We must guard against anti-Leninism on principle! The greatest caution and full tact is demanded of German criticism of the Russian proletariat!"² He soon recognised, however, that in order to tackle the immense task of "setting an example for the proletariat of other countries in pioneering the way towards the world social revolution", not only energy "but also wisdom and time are needed, and wisdom also in order to win time".³ As a true internationalist, Liebknecht stressed a priority importance of revolutionary *self-criticism*. The Russian working class, he wrote, "martyrs for the sins of the German proletariat, can hold their heads high even in their deepest troubles".⁴ The German proletariat was obliged to save its honour, and the fate of the proletariat of Russia and the whole world: "No effort is too great, or is great enough. Let blood spurt from under our nails, let victims fall. It is our greatest and holiest cause".⁵

Rosa Luxemburg, rejecting all the Kautskian arguments about Russia's "immaturity" for revolution, considered it the "immortal historical merit" of Lenin and the Bolsheviks that they had led the

¹ Franz Mehring, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. 15, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1977, pp. 768-70.

² Karl Liebknecht, *Politische Aufzeichnungen aus seinem Nachlass*, Verlag der Wochenschrift Die Aktion, Berlin-Wilmersdorf, 1921, p. 34.

³ Karl Liebknecht, *Gesammelte Reden und Schriften*, Vol. 9, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1968, p. 503.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 443-44.

⁵ Karl Liebknecht, *Politische Aufzeichnungen aus seinem Nachlass*, p. 54.

way for the international proletariat, had boldly seized political power and thereby advanced the world battle of labour and capital and for the first time in the world "posed the practical problem of achieving socialism".¹ At the same time she tried to grasp the Bolshevik experience in a critical way, considering that criticism of some of their steps would not damage them but would be the best school for the German and international proletariat. In an unpublished manuscript written in prison she expressed her thoughts on a number of matters of revolutionary tactics. These contained some mistakes which were due both to lack of information and to misconceptions characteristic of the European Left and arising from the insufficient experience. On coming out of prison, and becoming convinced during the German revolution that certain old ideas needed reviewing, Rosa Luxemburg decided not to publish the notes. In 1921 they were published with an anti-Soviet commentary by Paul Levi (who had been expelled from the KPD), that evoked a protest from Lenin, Clara Zetkin, and Adolf Warski.²

Rosa Luxemburg highly valued the fact that the Bolshevik Party, by advancing and carrying out the slogan "All Power to the Workers and Peasants!" had decided the long-standing question of "the majority of the people", a kind of bogey for German Social-Democrats for many years: "This parliamentary mole's wisdom stands the real dialectic of the revolution on its head: the way is not through the majority to revolutionary tactics, but through revolutionary tactics to a majority." Having taken power the Bolsheviks courageously put forward a consistent revolutionary programme: not to secure bourgeois democracy but to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat so as to realise socialism. The October uprising was therefore "not only an actual saving of the Russian Revolution but also a vindication of the honour of international socialism".³

Rosa Luxemburg sharply condemned Kautsky for a doctrinaire attitude to democracy and an apologia for bourgeois democracy, herself considering the democracy of the future to be proletarian, revolutionary, socialist democracy which was "nothing else than the dictatorship of the proletariat". In that connection she doubted, how-

¹ Rosa Luxemburg, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 4, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1974, p. 332.

² V.I. Lenin, "Notes of a Publicist", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 240; Clara Zetkin, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 381-82; A. Warski, *Rosa Luxemburgs Stellung zu den taktischen Problemen der Revolution*, Hamburg, 1922. Attempts to counterpose Rosa Luxemburg to Lenin continue to our day. For a critique of these views see R.Y. Evzerov and I.S. Yazhborovskaya, *Rosa Luxemburg*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 269-77 (in Russian); Annelies Laschitzka and Günter Radczun, *Rosa Luxemburg. Ihr Wirken in der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1971, pp. 425-44.

³ Rosa Luxemburg, *op. cit.*, Vol. 4, p. 341. See also *Kommunist*, 1979, No. 1, pp. 69-70.

ever, the expediency of the restriction of the suffrage and democratic liberties in Soviet Russia (unaware that Lenin considered this measure a temporary one, due to emergency conditions and not of general applicability). While recognising the legitimacy of the dispersal of the reactionary Constituent Assembly, she suggested that a new general election should be scheduled immediately; she also meditated on the possibility of uniting the Soviets—the backbone of the Revolution—and the Constituent Assembly.¹ She was worried lest revolutionary coercion, the inevitability of which she recognised in the existing situation, would stifle the political activity of the masses, lest wide resort to terror against the enemies of the revolution would lower the morale of the revolutionaries themselves, and lest the dictatorship of a class become a dictatorship of leaders. She did not know what attention Lenin had paid to this complicated problem. She was under a misapprehension in thinking that the Bolsheviks intended to make a virtue of necessity and to declare the special features of the Russian Revolution, those imposed by circumstances, a model for emulation internationally.²

While considering the Decree on Land a superlative political tactic, Rosa Luxemburg expressed fears that the division of the land among the peasants would complicate the subsequent socialist transformation of the village. She also mistakenly rejected the right of nations to self-determination.³ These wrong ideas largely stemmed from lack of practical experience and were also linked with the traditional maxim that it was impossible in general to carry through a socialist revolution in one country and equivalent to trying to square the circle. This idea is contained in Luxemburg's unsigned article in the *Spartacus Letters* entitled "The Russian Tragedy". The editors considered it necessary to append a note that the fears expressed in it were caused by the *objective* situation, not by the actions of the Bolsheviks, and that the article was being published mainly because of the conclusion it set forth that a German revolution was a necessity.⁴ From the proposition of the impossibility of a socialist revolution in one country, however, which had become theoretically outmoded after Lenin's work on imperialism, Luxemburg and her colleagues drew the politically correct conclusion that a most energetic mobilisation of the international proletariat for revolutionary action was needed—to save the Russian Revolution and to develop the world revolution. She wrote: "There is only one solution for the tragedy in which Russia is caught: an insurrection in the rear of German imperialism, a Ger-

¹ On Rosa Luxemburg's other attitude to these matters at the time of the November Revolution in Germany, see Chapter 4 of this volume.

² A. Laschitzka and G. Radczun, *op. cit.*, pp. 353, 356, 358-64.

³ Rosa Luxemburg, *op. cit.*, pp. 345-52.

⁴ *Spartakusbriefe*, pp. 453, 459.

man mass uprising as the signal for the international revolutionary ending of mass murder."¹

The difficult search for the approach to the impending revolution led the Spartacus leaders to the conclusion in October 1918 that the time had come to call the working class directly to the proletarian socialist revolution, the first appeal and the first stage of which should be "Germany a republic". They hoped that the action of the masses in Germany would be a signal for similar actions in Austro-Hungary, Bulgaria and, possibly, Romania. These countries would, naturally, establish contact immediately with the Russian Revolution, and then the countries of the West would inevitably be involved in the general stream of events, in the face of the powerful tide of the proletarian revolution in Central and Eastern Europe. The German Revolution, the Spartacists wrote, would therefore be in more favourable circumstances from the very beginning than the Russian, which was isolated and being mauled by the imperialists. "The knot of the international situation has lain in Germany from the beginning; only the sword in the hands of the German proletariat can cut it."²

The All-German Conference of the Spartacus League, which met in Berlin on October 7, 1918 with the participation of Hamburg and Bremen Left Radicals, declared that the war had not only intensified the objective preconditions for revolution but had also brought the masses of the people directly to it. The policy of the "government Socialists" and Kautskian independents was sharply criticised. The conference oriented the people on an armed uprising and a resolute struggle for a republic, and called for the setting up of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils everywhere.³ At the same time political and social—*democratic*—demands were placed in the foreground of the programme appeal: viz., repeal of the state of emergency and liberation of political prisoners; alienation of the banks, mines and big landholdings; shorter working day and a minimum wage; elimination of the separate states and dynasties. Realisation of these demands, the appeal said, would not yet mean achievement of the main aim, but they would be "the touchstone whether the democratisation that the ruling classes and their agents shoot you a line about is genuine".⁴ Indeed, there was a serious danger that the slogan of fake "democratisation" might become a weapon against the revolution and real democratisation in the hands of the bourgeoisie and social reformists.

¹ *Spartakusbriege*, p. 460. This issue of *Spartacus Letters* was the only one that came, somehow, into Lenin's hands in October 1918. He immediately wrote to J.A. Berzin in Berne: "Collect a set of *Spartakusbund* (I have seen No. 11, IX, 1918) and republish the entire set in 4 languages. Also Junius and Liebknecht." (V.I. Lenin, "To J.A. Berzins", *Collected Works*, Vol. 44, Moscow, 1977, p. 154.)

² *Ibid.*, p. 463.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 470.

⁴ *Spartakus im Kriege*, Berlin, 1927, pp. 222-23.

The democratic programme was an undoubted merit of the German Left who were striving to draw the masses into struggle for socialism, beginning with a fight for the most immediate and understandable demands along the lines of long-standing tradition. The weakness of the Left, however, was that they had no revolutionary *organisation* capable of leading this struggle. Spartacus remained a militant but small group within the Independent Social-Democratic Party. Although it was said at the conference that co-operation with that party had not been successful, and Franz Mehring had already written in an open letter to the Russian Bolsheviks back in June 1918 that a union of the Spartacists and the Independents in one party was a mistake,¹ no conclusions were drawn. The conference encouraged ideological separation of the revolutionaries and centrists, but the issue of organisational separation and the founding of an independent revolutionary party was not even posed.

Noting that the revolutionary movement in Germany had received essential moral support from the Russian Revolution, the conference resolved: "to convey to the comrades in Russia our gratitude, solidarity and fraternal sympathy, and the promise that this solidarity will be shown not only in word, but in deed following the Russian pattern."² Lenin replied to this appeal, highly appreciating the services of Spartacus and expressed hopes for a speedy victory of the German revolution.³

In spite of its shortcomings, the German Left was at the time the strongest and most influential group in the European Left on both the theoretical and the political plane. A serious danger for the coming revolution in Europe stemmed from its insufficient *organisation*. Lenin, therefore, wrote with anxiety in October 1918, when concluding his article against Kautsky: "Europe's greatest misfortune and danger is that it has *no* revolutionary party. It has parties of traitors like the Scheidemanns, Renaudels, Hendersons, Webbs and Co., and of servile souls like Kautsky. But it has no revolutionary party."⁴

Lenin had already expressed fears earlier that in the course of a revolution a critical situation could arise in the absence of a really revolutionary party capable of organising and leading in the struggle, a situation when "the proletariat will be faced with the immediate task of winning power, expropriating the banks, and effecting other dictatorial measures. The bourgeoisie—and especially the intellectuals of the Fabian and Kautskyite type—will, at such a moment,

¹ *Pravda*, June 13, 1918.

² *Spartakusbrieife*, pp. 470-71.

³ V.I. Lenin, "To the Members of the Spartacus Group", *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, p. 369.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *op. cit.*, Vol. 28, p. 113.

strive to split and check the revolution by foisting limited, democratic [i.e., bourgeois—*Auth.*] aims on it." And these bourgeois-democratic demands at the moment when the proletarians' assault on the foundations of the power of the capitalist class had begun, "are in a certain sense liable to act as a hindrance to the revolution".¹ The October Revolution in Russia had forced the Bolsheviks to face this danger many times and to parry it. Would the European revolutionaries be able to cope with it?

Lenin deeply believed in the immense revolutionary potential of the mass proletarian movement. He, therefore, capped his caution about the absence of revolutionary parties in Europe with the words: "Of course, a mighty, popular revolutionary movement may rectify this deficiency, but it is nevertheless a serious misfortune and a grave danger."²

THE MATURING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS IN EUROPE

In the autumn of 1918 there was a decisive turn in the course of the World War. The exhaustion of manpower and material resources was making itself felt in the Central Powers. The reduction of the area under crops and the livestock, and the tight economic blockade by the Entente, had pushed the population of these countries to the brink of famine. The lack of raw materials was acutely felt. Labour productivity began to decline as a result of mobilisation, exhaustion, undernourishment and epidemics, and output of coal and steel fell. In Germany, the most developed country of the coalition, industrial production declined to 57 per cent of the prewar level. The burdens of the war and the economic dislocation were even greater in Austro-Hungary and Bulgaria.

The decline in the standard of living of the broad masses of the poor and needy and the impoverishment of millions of working people were not simply due to loss of breadwinners and hunger, but were also linked with the increase in taxation, the depreciation of money, the raising of rents, the mounting cost of living and profiteering. The bloody drain of the war, the horrors of life in the trenches and the impoverishment and destitution in the rear were compounded by a backbreaking regime in factories and military and police persecution of all who tried to expose the rapacious character of the imperialist war, to tear the trappings off chauvinism, all who fought

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, Moscow, 1974, p. 153.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky", *op. cit.*, p. 113.

for the observance of the workers' elementary rights. It became increasingly difficult to contain the anger and outrage of the masses. Economic and anti-war demands became more and more closely intertwined with political ones.

In Germany strikes of miners and metal and engineering workers shook Berlin, the Rhineland, Westphalia, Silesia, and Saxony by turns. Ferment also began among the peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie. Everyone thirsted for peace. The situation in Austro-Hungary was even more tense. The Hapsburgs' attempts to begin separate peace negotiations with representatives of the USA were unsuccessful. Confusion and vacillation reigned in ruling circles, ethnic strife intensified, the government's parliamentary support crumbled, ministerial reshufflings began, all evidence of a growing crisis at the top. In September there was a new wave of strikes triggered off by hunger and the rising cost of living. The army was starving and lacked equipment, clothing and ammunition. The army of Bulgaria was no less exhausted and demoralised.

The general balance of military strength was altering on the Western Front, especially as the American contingents arrived. The German summer offensive on the Marne, demagogically called "the battle for peace", was the last. After tactical successes it petered out. On the Italian front the Austro-Hungarian offensive on the Piave ended in failure. In August the Allies' Amiens operation led to a breaching of the German lines. Germany lost the strategic initiative altogether. August 8 has gone down in history as the German army's black day. The fighting capacity of the soldiers began to decline. Karl Liebknecht noted "disintegration of discipline ('morale') in the units that were infected on the Eastern Front by the Russians, and then transferred from there to the Western Front".¹ Lenin said that, "the price Germany had to pay for crushing the revolution in Red Latvia, Finland, and the Ukraine was the demoralisation of her army.... What the German diplomats joked about—the 'Russification' of the German soldiers—now turns out to be no joke at all, but the bitter truth. The spirit of protest is rising, 'treason' is becoming a common thing in the German army."² That also applied to the armies of Germany's allies.

When the troops of the Entente broke through the Salonika Front in the Balkans on September 15 to 18, 1918, thousands of Bulgarian soldiers, driven to despair, turned their bayonets against their commanders and started to march on Sofia in order to punish those guilty of the war, headed by the tsar and the government. It was a tremen-

¹ Karl Liebknecht, *Gesammelte Reden und Schriften*, Vol. 9, p. 456.

² V.I. Lenin, "Speech at the First All-Russia Congress on Education, August 28, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 86.

dous spontaneous action during which the anti-war movement grew into an open armed fight against the ruling classes.

The government sent a special delegation, which was accompanied by leaders of the Agrarian Party (the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Alliance) Alexander Stambolisky and Raiko Daskalov, to meet the rebel soldiers whose numbers were growing rapidly. But they did not manage to stop the troops by persuasion. Then in Radomir, on December 27, after the departure of the delegation, Daskalov, pressured by the soldiers, declared Tsar Ferdinand and his government deposed and Bulgaria a republic with Stambolisky president. The insurrectionary troops moved on Sofia, but the government, having urgently signed an armistice with the Entente on September 29, sent loyal troops supported by German units and artillery against the mutinous soldiers. On September 29/30 the soldiers' march was stopped about 15 kilometres from Sofia, near the village of Vladai, and the forces of the badly organised mutineers were brutally routed. Three days later Radomir also fell. The attempt to declare the country a republic failed, though that was the general demand of the broad masses indignant at the autocratic tsarist regime, which did not observe the country's constitution and the parliamentary system. The uprising, which has gone down in history as the Vladai Insurrection, was defeated because of the absence of a revolutionary leadership. The political crisis was resolved for a time by the abdication of Ferdinand in favour of his son Boris III. Bulgaria withdrew from the war.

On September 26 the Anglo-French and American troops passed to the offensive on the Western Front, broke through the German defences and soon forced the German troops to begin withdrawing from the French territory. The impending military collapse caused serious alarm in the ruling circles of Germany. On September 29, Field Marshal Hindenburg and General Ludendorff poured oil on the fire by demanding "an immediate armistice to avert catastrophe" from the government, because "the army cannot wait even another 48 hours". This panic pressure was dictated primarily by the General Staff's desire to free itself of the responsibility for the past and the future and to preserve the army. But it accelerated the crisis at the top.

In the face of the real threat of revolution from below the German capitalist class decided to forestall it by a fake revolution at the top. On October 3 the Kaiser appointed Prince Max von Baden, a reputed liberal, the new Reichschancellor. For the first time right-wing Social-Democrats, Philipp Scheidemann and Gustav Bauer, were included in the cabinet; they had long been christened "Kaiser Socialists" and dreamed of becoming "saviours of the Fatherland". President Woodrow Wilson was sent a note requesting peace, and a show

of parliamentarising the regime was hastily made on. Karl Liebknecht was released from prison under the pressure of the masses.

Lenin, recuperating from wounds in Gorki, appraised the political crisis in Germany with amazing penetration on the basis of only scanty information available: "The panicky bewilderment both of the government and of all the exploiting classes in general has become abundantly clear to the whole people. The hopelessness of the military situation and the lack of support for the ruling classes among the working people have been exposed at one go. This crisis means either that the revolution has begun or at any rate that the people have clearly realised it is inevitable and imminent... And the admission of Scheidemann and Co. to the cabinet would only hasten the revolutionary outburst."¹

Foreseeing that the German workers were facing most severe tests, Lenin drew important practical conclusions: "The international revolution has come so close in *one week* that it has to be reckoned with as an event of the *next few days*."

"No alliances either with the government of Wilhelm, or with the government of Wilhelm II + Ebert, etc.

"But for the German worker masses, the German working people in their millions, once they have begun with their spirit of revolt (so far *only* a spirit), *we are beginning to prepare* a fraternal alliance, *bread*, military aid."

The concluding words were dictated by a deep sense of international duty: "We are all ready to die to help the German workers advance the revolution which has begun in Germany."²

Lenin wanted to address the meeting of the ARCEC, Moscow Soviet and unions on October 3, even if with a 15-minute speech, but, as Krupskaya recalled, "consent was not given, despite Ilyich's earnest request. His health was a matter of great concern... Ilyich knew that no car would be sent for him, yet he sat by the roadside that day, waiting for it. 'You could never tell!'"³ Lenin's letter was read out at the meeting, and a resolution he proposed was passed and immediately telegraphed throughout the country and abroad.

The revolutionary crisis engulfed Austro-Hungary as well. The multinational empire began to fall apart. Baron von Hussarek's government was losing authority catastrophically, and attempts to form a coalition with participation of representatives of the Slav nationalities failed. The manifesto of Emperor Karl I promising to

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Letter to a Joint Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet and Representatives of Factory Committees and Trade Unions, October 3, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 101.

² V.I. Lenin, "To J.M. Sverdlov and L.D. Trotsky", *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, p. 364.

³ N.K. Krupskaya, *Reminiscences of Lenin*, FLPH, Moscow, 1959, p. 487.

reconstruct the empire on a federal basis made no impression. The moment the Italian troops passed into offensive the front began to disintegrate: soldiers and sailors refused to continue the clearly lost war. On October 28, Foreign Minister Count Andrassy appealed to the USA for peace. That signalled the break-up of the empire.

Already on October 21 the Austrian deputies of the Reichsrat had declared themselves a Provisional National Assembly headed by three equal representatives of two bourgeois parties and the Social-Democratic Party.

In the Czech lands and Slovakia the main force of the revolutionary anti-Hapsburg movement was the working class, which called a general strike in the middle of October, demanding an independent democratic republic (in some cities even a socialist one). The compromising of the Social-Democratic leaders, however, allowed the bourgeoisie to win the dominant position in the Czechoslovak Republic proclaimed on October 28.

In Hungary mass demonstrations and meetings on October 27 and 28 supported the National Council created by two bourgeois parties and the Social-Democrats and headed by Count Mihály Károlyi who hoped to find a "constitutional" solution.

In the Southern Slav lands a mass peasant movement developed, and in several towns Workers' Councils were set up. But the bourgeois parties together with the leaders of the Social-Democrats of Croatia and Slovenia formed a People's Veche in Zagreb on October 29 and proclaimed the founding of an independent state of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs.

In Galicia the movement to create an independent Polish state gathered strength. The working class was actively involved in the mass movement against the Hapsburgs.

On October 30, *Pravda* wrote about Austro-Hungary: "The break-up is no longer a threat. It has become a fait accompli." Even before the revolutionary explosion had ended the Hapsburg monarchy, several separate national states had begun to take shape. In this process, the national bourgeoisie consolidated itself before the working class of Austro-Hungary managed to gain leadership of the national struggle. The working class had not yet succeeded in beginning the social revolution, when it was already divided by the new national state frontiers.

Lenin, characterising the situation in Central Europe in those days, said the workers' revolution was knocking on the door everywhere. But that did not mean that the revolutions surging in the various countries had to deal with identical socio-political tasks. They had three circumstances in common: (1) the impossibility of continuing the imperialist war; (2) the bankruptcy of the regimes responsible for it; (3) a considerable, more or less significant set of

unsolved democratic tasks. The concrete roads of revolutionary struggle in the different countries, however, depended on the level of economic development reached, the historically established socio-political structure, and the alignment of class forces.

The revolutionary crisis was not developing evenly, as was to be expected. Europe was an intricate conglomeration of countries and nations. The differences of the specific conditions lay in several planes, sometimes intersecting: there were belligerent and neutral countries, countries suffering defeat and others winning, countries with a greater or smaller backlog of unresolved historical tasks, and with varying degrees of political and economic conflicts, countries with different levels of organisation and consciousness of the working class and its capacity for revolutionary leadership, and with different alignment of social forces. Besides, the world war had aroused a thirst for self-determination among the nations. National and nationalistic feelings were roused to the extreme, and that weakened the international ties and traditional international proletarian solidarity.

It was impossible, in the actual situation, to count on Europe, let alone the rest of the world, being able to make a simultaneous and "pure" social revolution. Already earlier Lenin had foreseen the inevitability of a host of social and political battles at various levels, and a series of revolutions and insurrections with, however, a common, objectively anti-capitalist, trend. He was cooling the hotheads who dreamed of some "field revolution" in which two armies—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie—would come together for a great battle, a revolution in which the proletariat of all lands would act together, tearing down boundary posts, with class community instead of national. He forecast that the international revolution would inevitably constitute a whole historical epoch, in which movements of various level of development and character would arise. This perspective oriented revolutionaries on a long, intricate, stubborn fight. It was this orientation that proved closest to the real course of events in subsequent years.

In the prewar years all Marxists (except the out-and-out revisionists) had considered that the main objective, primarily economic, premises for a *socialist* revolution existed in Germany, an advanced capitalist country. Lenin shared this view, corroborated by German revolutionaries, and saw in Germany a developed capitalist power where the Junkers had merged with the bourgeoisie within the system of military cum state monopoly capitalism and which represented the most vivid embodiment of economic, production and social conditions for socialism.¹

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Left-wing' Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 340.

In Austro-Hungary, especially on the Slav periphery, the set of unresolved bourgeois-democratic tasks was still more considerable, and Lenin foresaw that the revolutionary process there would be more complicated, more multilevel and longer, and that the approach to the socialist revolution called, in the first place, for the carrying out of bourgeois-democratic reforms in agriculture and ethnic relations.¹

In the countries of Central and South-East Europe (except Bulgaria) a significant proportion of landed estates remained, and even where capitalist forms of business predominated there were survivals of feudal oppression. Class antagonisms were intertwined in the country with national ones; the fight for land and abolition of survivals of feudalism was at the same time a fight against the domination of the feudal landowners of the oppressing nation. The Croatian and Slovene peasantry were oppressed by Austrian and Hungarian landowners. In Slovakia Hungarian magnates were dominant. In the Polish lands that formed part of Germany the feudal landlord was, as a rule, German. In Czechia a considerable part of the landed estates were owned by Germans, and the majority of the Romanian lands forming part of the Hapsburg monarchy by Hungarians. The struggle for national liberation had become particularly tense because of the need to wage it not only against former oppressors, but also against German and Austrian occupation troops (in the Kingdom of Poland and Romania). Everywhere, the peasantry suffering cruelly from both land hunger and war exactions took part in this struggle. For those reasons the fight for democratic reforms and the overthrow of national oppression, for the restoration or establishment of independent states forged to the fore.

The working class was undoubtedly the vanguard of the revolutionary movements, although the imperialist war had rather weakened its position; it had suffered most of all from conscription and the disorganisation of industry, from hunger and the militarist terror. Consolidation of the proletariat as a class had also been slowed down by the objective advance to the fore of national tasks in Eastern Europe. Lenin had pointed this out back in 1916, stressing that "the action of the nationally oppressed proletariat and peasantry *jointly* with the nationally oppressed bourgeoisie *against* the oppressor nation" was inevitable there during revolution. And this could hamper the growth of class awareness of the proletariat since national unity impeded the immediate establishment of class unity.² Furthermore,

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 151; "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism", Vol. 23, pp. 38, 59.

² V.I. Lenin, "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism". *op. cit.*, pp. 62, 59.

the imperialist war had helped infect the working class with germs of chauvinism and nationalism, and sometimes even turn the development of its class consciousness back under the influence of social reformists. On the other hand, however, the October Revolution in Russia had created favourable conditions and become the decisive factor for rapid development of the initiative of the masses and success of the national-liberation and democratic revolutions.

In the Entente countries in the autumn of 1918 the anti-war and revolutionary movement was held back not only by the dictatorial measures of Clemenceau and manoeuvres of Lloyd George. The greatest obstruction was a new wave of chauvinism evoked by the summer offensive of the Germans and later by the portents of military victory. In the neutral countries the movement, though growing, had not reached its peak.

For these reasons it was Central Europe that became the focus of revolutionary proletarian actions. It was there that the long-brewing conflicts aggravated by military defeat and the crisis of confidence in the ruling Top People, grew into revolution. Lenin, who spoke with great enthusiasm and hope of the prospects of the European revolutions, again and again reminded that it was difficult to begin the socialist revolution in the citadels of imperialism. There the workers were opposed not by the Romanov's disintegrating regime but by "a bourgeoisie that is fully organised and can rely on all the achievements of modern civilisation and engineering", there was imperialism whose armour was, unfortunately, made of the best steel, there the bourgeoisie had more experience and ability to manoeuvre and manipulate the psychology of the masses, there the split introduced into the labour movement by opportunism was the deepest.¹

These warnings proved to be profoundly right.

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Speech at the Second All-Russia Congress of Commissars for Labour, May 22, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 400.

Chapter 4

REVOLUTION AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION

THE NOVEMBER REVOLUTION IN GERMANY

On October 22, 1918, Lenin for the first time after recuperating spoke at a joint session of the ARCEC, the Moscow Soviet (Mossoviet), works committees and trade unions. Speaking of the unequal development of the international proletarian revolution, he stressed that the Bolsheviks' forecast of its inevitability in Europe had finally been confirmed. The main link in the international chain was Germany, "since the German revolution is already ripe; and the success of the world revolution most of all depends on it". Of course, he continued, "World revolution is not so smooth as to proceed in the same way everywhere, in all countries. If it were, we should have been victorious long ago. Every country has to go through definite political stages." Referring to "everybody who knows anything about the state of affairs" in Germany, he expressed his view that "a popular revolution, and perhaps a proletarian revolution" was imminent there.¹ Indeed, not two weeks later the whole of Germany was gripped by a powerful people's movement.

Contrary to the general rule the German revolution did not begin in the capital but on the north-western periphery of the country. On November 3, 1918 the sailors of the navy stationed at Kiel refused to obey an order to put to sea for a battle with the British Navy. They hoisted red flags and were immediately supported by the workers. The Seamen's Council and the Workers' Council soon merged. This was by no means a "local outbreak", as the authorities thought. The revolution spread like wildfire from Kiel along the coast and then throughout the country. Another focus flared up almost simultaneously in South Germany. In Munich a Provisional Council of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants proclaimed a Bavarian Republic. By November 9 the revolution, gripping one industrial centre after

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Report at a Joint Session of the All-Russia Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet, Factory Committees and Trade Unions, October 22, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 114, 115, 116, 123.

another in Western and Central Germany, with Workers' and Soldiers' Councils set up everywhere, reached Berlin. Two of its features had already by then revealed themselves: (a) the national character of the spontaneous outbreak, and (b) the absence of a central leadership of the movement.

The government and the Kaiser's staff made frantic efforts to halt the revolutionary wave. The RSFSR Embassy, whose very presence in the capital seemed dangerous to the authorities in revolutionary days, was on November 6 hastily expelled from Berlin after a crude police provocation staged with the help of Scheidemann. Attempts were made to isolate Berlin from the provinces. The Kaiser considered marching against the revolution at the head of troops of the Western Front. But everything was in vain.

On the morning of November 9 Berlin workers came out on the streets at the call of the Spartacists and the revolutionary shop stewards. They were joined by soldiers, and in a few hours the city was in the hands of the insurgents. Prince Max von Baden, hoping to save what he could, no longer waiting for the Kaiser's consent, himself announced his resignation and passed government authority to the Social-Democrat Friedrich Ebert. The new Reichschancellor called on the people to quit the streets; and his colleague Scheidemann, hastening to wrest the initiative from the revolutionaries, proclaimed Germany a democratic republic from a window of the Reichstag. The board of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) declared that it was "leading the revolution" together with the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany (USPD), and proposed that they jointly form a government. These manoeuvres had their effect on the workers, and especially on the soldiers, who were inexperienced in politics and dazzled by the easily won victory. The right-wing Social-Democrats, relying on their ramified organisation, were able to secure a majority for themselves at the general meeting of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils of Berlin held in the Busch Circus on the evening of November 10. Central power was vested in the Council of People's Delegates (CPD) formed of Kaiser Socialists (Ebert, Scheidemann and Otto Landsberg) and Independents (H. Haase, Wilhelm Dittmann and Emil Barth).

Karl Liebknecht and other Spartacists were on the streets with the revolutionary people on the day of the uprising. Liebknecht proclaimed Germany a "socialist republic" from a balcony of the Kaiser's Palace, adding, however, that the overthrow of the monarchist government was only the first step.¹ The newspaper *Rote Fahne*, brought out by a printing works seized by the workers and soldiers, appealed

¹ Karl Liebknecht, *Gesammelte Reden und Schriften*, Vol. 9, Berlin, 1974, p. 595.

to the people not to be carried away by the excitement of the first successes, not to quit the streets, to remain armed and be on guard at every moment.¹ The sober voice of caution was drowned, however, among the shouts of jubilation. At the meeting of the Berlin Councils soldiers greeted Liebknecht's words "The counter-revolution is amongst us!" with hostility.

On November 11 at a meeting of the leaders of the Spartacus, the first after the revolution, Liebknecht, Wilhelm Pieck, Hermann Duncker and others welcomed Rosa Luxemburg and Leo Jogiches, just released from prison. All agreed that the "social nucleus" of the revolution had not yet revealed itself, that it was only beginning and the moment had not yet come when the real revolutionaries could take the lead. The resolution passed to convert the group into the Spartacus League, to set up a Central Committee and publish *Die Rote Fahne* regularly, was the first serious step toward the formation of an independent revolutionary party.

The first wave of the German Revolution proved powerful enough to sweep away a dozen and a half monarchs, including the Kaiser and King of Prussia Wilhelm Hohenzollern. It forced the ruling circles of Germany to sign an armistice, ending the bloodshed, and proclaim a republic. Its driving force in those stormy days was the urban workers and the revolutionary sailors and soldiers, in other words, the industrial proletariat and part of the petty bourgeoisie of town and country in sailors' reefers and soldiers' greatcoats. It was a people's revolution during which the masses put forward their own demands, and tried to create independently a new social system in place of the smashed old one. The "Russian example" was very much to the point: the German Workers' and Soldiers' Councils became the embryo of a new revolutionary government.

The revolutionaries' hopes, however, that power would pass immediately to the proletariat were not justified. Ebert and others hating the revolution and fearing it sought an alliance with the forces of reaction. They had hardly taken the helm of state when they began to cook up a conspiracy against the revolution. The whole bureaucratic machinery of the civil service remained intact. Ebert, telephoning to GHQ, concluded a secret agreement with General Groener (later confirmed by Field Marshal Hindenburg) on restoring officers' authority in the army and on joint actions against the revolutionary workers and soldiers. The trade union leaders in turn entered an agreement with representatives of the employers' unions (the monopolists Hugo Stinnes, Ernst von Borsig and others) on "business cooperation". It, too, was aimed against the Workers' Councils, and provided for the setting up of "co-ordinating commissions" on a parity

¹ *Die Rote Fahne*, November 9/10, 1918.

basis, and continuation of the policy of class peace after the war.

In those days, too, the Social-Democratic rulers brusquely rejected the trainloads of grain sent by Russian workers and refused to let the Soviet Embassy return to Berlin and to restore diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia. They wheedled food from the American president, promising in return to "preserve order", i.e., to oppose development of the revolution. At the signing of the armistice the German representatives themselves proposed to the Entente to keep German troops in the occupied areas of Soviet Russia until the arrival of the Allies' armies there. In the government declaration of the Council of People's Delegates not a single real measure was announced to implement the promised "socialist programme", but a solemn guarantee of private property had a place alongside promises of democratic reforms.

Although all the details of the conspiracy against the revolution were not known at the time, Rosa Luxemburg described the situation with the utmost clarity: "The revolution has begun. But not jubilation over the achievement, not triumph over the overthrown enemy is called for, rather the strongest self-criticism and an iron concentration of energy to carry on the work. Because the achievement is small and the enemy is not crushed." All the new government's actions were dictated by fear of the worker masses. But "before the revolution has acquired force, impetus and tempo, its vigour, its socialist and proletarian character are being emasculated". The government "is switching the revolution onto bourgeois lines".¹ Karl Liebknecht also stressed that "up to now, between the political form and the social content of the German revolution there has been a contradiction.... Its political form is proletarian action, its social content is bourgeois reform".²

Thus right from the start the Social-Democratic rulers succeeded in holding back the revolution, in imposing limited aims on it, and in giving it a bourgeois-democratic rather than a socialist character. It differed from the classical bourgeois revolutions of the past, however, primarily in the fact that the proletariat and not the bourgeoisie was leading it. In the epoch of imperialism, and in view of the experience of the three Russian Revolutions, the developed and organised German proletariat was bound to strive to push its revolution forward to the tackling of socialist tasks. It also created the tool for such a transition, viz., the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, which had covered all Germany in a dense network by the middle of November.

But while the Soviets in Russia had possessed real power in the first months after the February Revolution, the German Councils

¹ Rosa Luxemburg, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 4, pp. 397, 399.

² Karl Liebknecht, *op. cit.*, p. 604.

either did not have it or let it slip. Although the declarations of the Councils in several big centres (Bremen, Dresden, Leipzig, Chemnitz) spoke of the need to continue the revolution and abolish the capitalist system, matters went no further than sporadic intrusions of the Councils into the functions of the existing administration. Only in some towns attempts were made to set up armed squads of a workers' Red Guard and to drive out reactionary officials and some of the employers. Nowhere did the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils achieve full power. Even those governments of the separate states that declared they "relied on the Councils" (Bavaria, Brunswick) did not take steps to break up the bourgeois-Junker state machinery. Only in Bremen and Hamburg were the old authorities pushed aside, but even then not for long.

That a dual power did not arise in Germany as it did in Russia is clearly shown by the development of relations between the Executive Committee of the Berlin Council and the People's Delegates' Government. At first the Executive Committee declared itself the leader of all the local Councils and the supreme body of the state, and even laid claim to "dictatorial power". It resolved to set up a Red Guard and called on worker-Socialists to join it. But the government set the soldiers of the garrison against the Executive Committee, telling them that the arming of the workers meant lack of confidence in the soldiers; the EC capitulated at once and repealed its decision. Meanwhile, the military commandant of Berlin, the right-wing Social-Democrat Otto Wels, formed a Republican Soldiers' Defence Force (*Soldatenwehr*) obedient only to the government. Step by step the EC was supplanted, was forced to cancel its instructions to local Workers' Councils on discharging officials who displayed counter-revolutionary tendencies, and then in general to forbid the Councils to interfere in the affairs of public authorities, transport and supply. The Councils in factories were advised by the EC to limit themselves to strictly practical matters.

On November 23 the Executive Committee transferred all executive power to the government.¹ Karl Liebknecht bitterly remarked that the authority of the Berlin and other Councils was "only a façade". For, he said, "political power does not consist in formal orders or powers voted somewhere but in the firm holding of real levers of power, strong enough to ensure it against all plots and schemes."² These real means proved to be in the hands of the bourgeoisie and right-wing Social-Democrats.

¹ *Aufrufe, Verordnungen und Beschlüsse des Vollzugsrates des Arbeiter- und Soldatenrates Gross-Berlin*, 1918, Nos. 10, 14, 26, 28, 29; Anton Fischer, *Die Revolutionskommandantur Berlin*, Berlin, 1922.

² Karl Liebknecht, *op. cit.*, p. 606.

The reason for the weakness of the German Councils was primarily that they were headed, as a rule, by centrists or right-wing Social-Democrats. But even the most radically minded Independents lacked understanding of the need to take all power resolutely into their own hands. The traditional kow-towing to the authority of the government and parliamentary illusions dominated them.

The preservation of the old government machinery and the restoration of army officers to their commands promoted rapid consolidation of the forces of counter-revolution. By the beginning of December reaction had already made its first test of strength. On December 6 a squad of putschists fired on a peaceful demonstration of Berlin workers. The day has come to be known as Bloody Friday. Similar ventures took place in Hamburg, Bremen, Lübeck, and Chemnitz. But in Essen and Müllheim in the Ruhr the Councils themselves arrested the conspirators.

The reactionaries resorted to outflanking manoeuvres in the struggle against the Councils. In many towns *bürgerliche Räte* (citizens' councils) made their appearance—councils of landlords, doctors, teachers, even pastors, demanding "equality". Bourgeois elements penetrated the Workers' Councils or dissolved them in "People's Councils". The Supreme Command allowed Soldiers' Councils to be set up in military units, obtaining counterfeit bodies obedient to the officers through this protective vaccination. In the rural areas government-sanctioned impostor *Bauernräte* formed by kulak-Junker organisations predominated.

A most important means of mobilising all forces against the revolution and the Councils was the slogan of the immediate convening of a Constituent National Assembly as the supreme body of "people's power". This slogan became the democratic screen behind which the Junkers, monopolists, the military, the bourgeois liberals, and the right-wing Social-Democratic and trade union leaders wove a net of conspiracy against the revolution. The centrist leaders (Haase, Rudolf Hilferding and Kautsky) also made their contribution to disorienting the masses, saying that the Constituent Assembly and bourgeois democracy would open up socialist prospects.

The only real way of advancing the German revolution further was to strengthen and develop the Councils and overcome their weakness. The revolutionary leaders understood that. Rosa Luxemburg wrote: "The road of the revolution follows clearly from its aim, and the methods from the tasks. *All power in the hands of the labouring masses, in the hands of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils.*" Since collaborators were at the head of most of them, she remarked, the following steps were necessary first of all: re-election of the Councils; their continuous functioning; the speediest convening of an all-German congress of Councils; immediate organisation not of "farmers" in general

but of the rural proletariat and small peasants; the setting up of a proletarian Red Guard; elimination of all bodies of the absolutist, military-police state; immediate confiscation of the property of the dynasties and big landowners; the convening of a world labour congress in Germany.¹ The strikes spreading spontaneously since the second half of November, and the interweaving of economic and political demands—all gave more and more weight to the revolutionaries' slogan '*All Power to the Councils!*'.

Power of the Councils or a National Assembly became the root question in Germany, pivotal for the fate of the revolution. Rosa Luxemburg, bringing out the fundamental contradiction between the two slogans, stressed the need for a class analysis of the very essence, not simply the form, of state power in the revolution: "The point today is not either democracy or dictatorship. The question put on the agenda by history is: *bourgeois* democracy or *socialist* democracy. For dictatorship of the proletariat is democracy in the socialist sense. Dictatorship of the proletariat is not bombs, putsches, riots, 'anarchy', as the agents of capitalist profit deliberately falsify things, but is the application of all political powers for the realisation of socialism, for the expropriation of the capitalist class in the sense of, and through the will of, the revolutionary majority of the proletariat, and therefore in the spirit of socialist democracy....

"Parliamentary cretinism was yesterday a weakness, today it is an ambiguity, tomorrow it will be a betrayal of socialism."²

In his *Theses*, published on November 28, 1918, Liebknecht pointed out that the proletariat must set up an All-German government of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, wrest political power from the capitalists and carry out radical social, economic and cultural reforms. "Bourgeois democracy is false democracy."³ Clara Zetkin spoke out in the same spirit.⁴ And the Spartacus paper *Die Rote Fahne* in a leading article formulated the cardinal issue of the development of the German revolution in the following way: "For or against socialism, against or for the National Assembly: there is no third alternative."⁵

However difficult it was for the German revolutionaries to come to such a principled position, it was even more difficult for them because of their organisational weakness in dealing with the practical task of "pushing" the German Councils into power, at the moment when they *could* have taken power but *did not want to*. This situation

¹ Rosa Luxemburg, *op. cit.*, pp. 397-98.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 409-410.

³ Karl Liebknecht, *op. cit.*, p. 631.

⁴ Clara Zetkin, *Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften*, Vol. II, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1960, pp. 68-69.

⁵ *Die Rote Fahne*, November 29, 1918.

became particularly clear at the All-German Congress of Councils that opened in Berlin on December 16. Only ten delegates represented the Spartacists, and 80 the Independents; the majority (around 400) followed right-wing Social-Democrats. Although around 250,000 workers took part in a revolutionary demonstration at the building where the congress met, their demand that Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg be allowed to take part in the congress was turned down, as was the demand of transfer of all central and local power to the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils.

The congress's decision for the Councils to abstain from power was similar to the actions of the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets in June 1917 where Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries predominated. But the German congress went further: it passed legislative as well as executive power to the government. Elections were called for the Constituent National Assembly for January 19, 1919 (a month earlier than proposed). That was an act of political suicide by the supreme body of the German Councils. But the congress could not that simply get rid of thousands of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils in the localities and army units, although it made their activity much more difficult and undermined their continued existence. A serious blow had been inflicted on the revolution. The stage of its comparatively peaceful development had come to an end.

On the eve of the congress the Spartacists had taken an important step toward independence of their organisation in publishing their programme manifesto written by Rosa Luxemburg and entitled *What Does the Spartacus League Want?* The results of the congress, the shooting of revolutionary sailors on Ebert's orders on December 24 (Bloody Christmas Eve), the refusal of the leaders of the Independent Social-Democrats to convene an extraordinary party congress to discuss urgent issues—all forced the Spartacist leadership to decide on a complete break with the USPD, that is to break with the centrists organisationally as well as ideologically.

On December 30, 1918, and January 1, 1919 the Founding Congress of the Communist Party of Germany (the Spartacus League) was held in Berlin. In addition to the Spartacist organisations, Bremen, Hamburg and other groups of Left Radicals (the International Communists of Germany) joined the party. But they failed to unite with the revolutionary shop stewards of Berlin, who were on the left flank of the USPD. The congress expressed fraternal solidarity with Soviet Russia and the Bolsheviks.

The congress adopted a programme that oriented the Party and the working class on socialist revolution. In the conditions that had built up in Germany, advance to socialism, the programme said, would not be easy. It would inevitably come up against resistance by the ruling classes that could only be broken by force. In general,

"the proletarian revolution needs no terror for its aims, it hates and abhors assassination, because it fights institutions not individuals". But it was reckless to believe that the German capitalist class, which excelled in "brutality, open cynicism, and baseness", would voluntarily give up property, profits and the privileges of exploitation. Its "resistance must be broken step by step with an iron fist and ruthless energy". The proletariat must realise that "the fight for socialism is the most violent civil war that world history has seen, and the proletarian revolution must prepare itself the weapons for this civil war.... Vesting the united mass of working people with all political power to tackle the tasks of the revolution—that is the *dictatorship of the proletariat and, therefore, genuine democracy*." The Workers' and Soldiers' Councils should be converted into "the concentrated power of the working class, pulled together tightly and reinforced to the utmost".¹

The party should seek answers to the problems arising during the revolution by learning (as Rosa Luxemburg put it) from "the ripe fruit of the experience" of the Bolsheviks. The Spartacus conference had already drawn up a programme of general democratic demands on the eve of the revolution, but the logic of the struggle forced them to shift the centre of gravity to criticism of bourgeois democracy, to concentrate to the maximum on the radical alternative, power of the Councils or a National Assembly, and to call for full power for the Councils. Only so could a sharp line be drawn between revolutionaries and reformists, and the revolutionary vanguard rallied and oriented on the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The rigid "either or" was highly costly. The straightforward, uncompromising character of the Spartacists' tactics made it difficult to involve those very significant strata of the working class (not to mention the semi-proletarian and non-proletarian masses) who believed in parliamentarism. The more experienced of the leaders were aware of these difficulties. After the decision of the Congress of Councils on elections for the National Assembly, for instance, Rosa Luxemburg favoured Communist participation in the election campaign. "The National Assembly," she wrote on December 23, 1918, "is a counter-revolutionary fortress, that is being set up *against* the revolutionary proletariat. Therefore this fortress has to be stormed and razed. To activate the masses *against* the National Assembly and to summon them to the bitterest struggle, we must make use of the voting and of the rostrum of the National Assembly." They could become a good "means of educating, rallying and mobilising the

¹ *Protokoll des Gründungsparteitages der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (30. Dezember 1918-1. Januar 1919)*, Berlin, 1972, pp. 316-19.

revolutionary masses, a stage in the fight for setting up the proletarian dictatorship".¹

At the Founding Congress of the KPD Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg did not wholly succeed in carrying their view. The young and inexperienced Communists, impatient and sincerely hating capitalist parliamentarism and the reformism of the Social-Democratic and trade union leaders, could not understand the need for such a tactical change. A majority of the congress voted to boycott the coming elections. Demands to leave the reformist trade unions were also voiced. Nor did the party succeed in finding the correct road to establishing an alliance of the working class and the labouring peasantry, above all the small peasants and agricultural labourers. Systematic organising work in the mass organisations, especially the Councils, was going with difficulty.

At the beginning of January 1919 the development of the German revolution reached a dramatic culmination. The Social-Democratic government, having created counter-revolutionary formations headed by monarchist officers, the Volunteer Corps, resorted to provocation. The dismissal of the Left Independent Robert Eichhorn, who had a standing among the workers, from the post of Police-President of Berlin was announced on January 4. That was a direct challenge. The next day more than 150,000 workers downed tools and came out on the streets of the capital. At a meeting of revolutionary shop stewards a Revolutionary Committee was formed (with Georg Ledebour and other Independents on it and also Liebknecht and Wilhelm Pieck), which called a general strike and a new demonstration under the slogan "Down with the Ebert-Scheidemann Government!" But the moment was unfavourable for offensive actions because the workers were not organised and could not count on the immediate support of the provinces.²

When a half-million workers came out on the streets on January 6, the Revolutionary Committee wavered and left the masses without leadership. Meanwhile, the government was ready and took action. The right-wing Social-Democrat Gustav Noske willingly agreed to take on the function of commander-in-chief. "Never mind," he said, "someone must be the bloodhound."³ The leaders of the Independents began negotiations with the government behind the workers' backs, thus enabling it to gain time and bring up troops. The Central Committee of the KPD withdrew its representatives from the Revolutionary Committee, not wanting to cover its shameful inaction with Liebknecht's name.

¹ Rosa Luxemburg, *op. cit.*, pp. 474-76.

² Wilhelm Pieck, *Reden und Aufsätze*, Vol. 1, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1950, pp. 112-17.

³ G. Noske, *Von Kiel bis Kapp*, Berlin, 1920, p. 68.

On the 11th government troops entered the city. Only in the premises of *Vorwärts* occupied by the printers and in the Police-Presidency building was an organised resistance put up. The isolated centres of resistance were suppressed by artillery. Those taken prisoner were tortured. The capital was seized by armed punitive squads, Noske's white guard. A massacre began.

Counter-revolutionary organisations also raised their heads, including the Anti-Bolshevik League, financed by monopolists and given the job of wiping out proletarian leaders. In spite of the man hunt, Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg did not want to stop work on *Die Rote Fahne*. On the evening of January 15 they were tracked down, arrested and taken to the Guard-Rifle Division headquarters. The chief of staff Captain Waldemar Pabst gave orders for them to be taken separately to the Moabit Prison, but his subordinates understood very well what was wanted of them. As Liebknecht came out of the hotel he was gravely wounded by a blow on the head from the butt of a rifle and put into a motorcar. When they entered the Tiergarten the car stopped, he was taken out and shot for allegedly "trying to escape". Two hours later Rosa Luxemburg was murdered in a car. The murderers bound her corpse with wire and threw it into the Landwehr Canal.

The January 1919 battles in Berlin, which Lenin and Sverdlov compared with the July days of 1917 in Petrograd, evoked a wide response throughout the country. On the 10th, the Workers' and Soldiers' Council of the big port of Bremen proclaimed a Bremen Räterepublik (Soviet Republic). Representatives of the bourgeois parties and right-wing Social-Democrats were excluded from the Council, which carried out several radical measures, viz., the formation of worker battalions, an increase in unemployment benefit and the establishment of new rates of pay. Emergency measures against counter-revolution included the disarming of the bourgeoisie and officers, and censorship of the bourgeois press. The Bremen Council, in a message of greeting to Soviet Russia, expressed hopes for successful development of the revolution in Russia and Germany. Cuxhaven followed in Bremen's footsteps. The Councils in Hamburg and other cities became active again. The bourgeoisie responded with open sabotage, and Noske's armed punitive squads soon suppressed Soviet Bremen by armed force.

As a result of the January battles the cardinal question of the German revolution, power of the Councils or a bourgeois parliament, was decided in favour of the latter. The elections for the National Assembly held on January 19, 1919 in an atmosphere of white terror gave 54 per cent of the votes to the bourgeois-Junker parties, which had decked themselves out in republican and democratic colours. The Social-Democrats got 38 per cent, and the Independents 8 per cent.

The Communists' boycott had no success. The elections showed that the broad masses of the people had not lost faith in the possibilities of parliamentarism. The bourgeois character of the National Assembly was ensured not only by the predominance of bourgeois parties in it but also by the fact that both socialist parties followed in the wake of bourgeois politics. Rudolf Hilferding, fighting for the National Assembly, had sworn that the German workers, in whose consciousness "democracy was strongly rooted", could not help winning a general election, while "unlimited continuation of the dictatorship of the Councils" meant "terror and civil war".¹ The fact that they did not get a majority, in spite of boastful forecasts, rather gladdened the Scheidemanns, because it justified continuing the coalition with the bourgeoisie and made it possible to camouflage their reluctance to carry out socialist promises.

The working class, however, still stood in the way of final confirmation of a bourgeois republic in Germany. For some time it was demoralised by the January defeats, and disoriented by social-reformist illusions. But a certain sobering took place. The Councils, though weakened, continued to exist. The revolutionary energy of the masses was not yet exhausted. And the "winners" themselves seriously feared a further development of the revolution. Ideological aid came to them from the leaders of German centrism.

The views of Kautsky and his followers evolved as the revolution developed. Having said, on its eve, that the Councils should in no circumstances be converted into organs of state power, he said with regret in the introduction to a new edition of the main chapters of his pamphlet *Dictatorship of the Proletariat* in November-December 1918: "Today we ourselves have a revolution. Today we face the problem of dictatorship or democracy, not for Russia, but for Germany." He now admitted that the Councils could play a certain positive role in "the first phase, the political revolution", but the tasks of the second phase, "the social revolution", could only be tackled by the National Assembly, and therefore it was "already high time to put an end to the intermediate situation and the indeterminacy associated with it".² At the end of December Kautsky wrote that every attempt to push the revolution forward was but violence and instigation of strife within the revolutionary class itself, and, moreover, represented degradation of the revolution.³

But there was also another view among the Independents, especially among those who were more closely linked with the Coun-

¹ *Die Freiheit*, Berlin, morning edition of November 18, 1918.

² K. Kautsky, *Demokratie oder Diktatur*, Berlin, 1918, p. 8.

³ K. Kautsky, "Das Weitertreiben der Revolution", *Die Freiheit*, supplement to the morning edition of December 29, 1918.

cils. Many centrist leaders, considering that the proletarian masses did not intend to abandon the Councils, maintained that they should be retained even after the bourgeois National Assembly convened, so that the Workers' Councils be combined with a bourgeois parliament. On February 9, 1919 Hilferding spoke in favour of constitutionalising the Workers' Councils.¹ Somewhat earlier, in late January, the Left Independent E. Däumig speaking in the Berlin Council expressed the idea that the Councils would preserve "their special significance".² The USPD group in the Assembly moved an amendment to the bill on the provisional government to put the Councils on the same footing as the National Assembly. When the Assembly rejected this the party published the appeal To the Revolutionary Proletariat of Germany. For the first time calling the Ebert-Scheidemann Government a bourgeois one, the appeal called on the workers to demand from it (and the bourgeois National Assembly) the constitutionalisation, along with the Parliament, of "the bearers and defenders of the revolution, the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils".³ The authors of the appeal remained silent on the fact that they themselves had contributed, over the three months of the revolution, to the weakening of the Councils, wrecking the fight for their sovereignty.

When Lenin read this, as he described it, "very remarkable and comic appeal" of the USPD, he evaluated it as the clearest expression of the ideological bankruptcy of the theorists of the Second International: "To reconcile, to unite the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat! How simple! What brilliantly philistine idea!

"The only pity is that it was tried in Russia, under Kerensky, by the united Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, those petty-bourgeois democrats who imagine themselves socialists."⁴

Meanwhile, factors generating popular discontent continued to operate. The working people's economic situation deteriorated. The cutting down of war production and demobilisation of the army swelled the number of unemployed. In February 1919 there were already more than a million unemployed, and in Berlin alone more than 300,000. Strikes broke out spontaneously more and more often, quickly spreading on a mass scale.

In the middle of February the Rhine-Westphalia industrial area, the heart of German heavy industry, became the centre of the movement. By a decision of a conference of Ruhr Workers' and Soldiers' Councils more than half of the mines stopped work. The workers

¹ *Die Freiheit*, February 9, 1919 (morning edition).

² *Der Arbeiter-Rat*, Berlin, No. 2, 1919, pp. 1-2.

³ *Die Freiheit*, February 11, 1919.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "The Third International and Its Place in History", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1977, p. 313.

demanded immediate "socialisation", meaning nationalisation, the conversion of capitalist private ownership of the means of production into public ownership. Uneasiness increased in government circles. Scheidemann was reported as telling the National Assembly: "The ground on which we stand is shaking. It will probably collapse in a very short time, if we do not succeed in putting an end to the folly and outrage in the Ruhr."¹ Whiteguard units attacked the workers. The French Marshal Foch permitted Noske's troops to carry out punitive raids in the neutral zone as well. Right-wing trade union leaders disorganised the struggle, announcing an end of the strike. Several thousand workers put up armed resistance to the government troops but were defeated.

At the end of February strikes swept Central Germany, where the miners also began the struggle. A strike cut Southern Germany off from the north, and the government and the National Assembly in Weimar found themselves blockaded. At the beginning of March the strike wave reached Berlin, but the Berlin Executive Committee of the Councils displayed indecision, and the Communists, having set up a separate strike committee, appealed to the workers: "Do not be led astray, do not be tempted into a military putsch, but carry on the struggle within peaceful bounds, with all your might and resolve."²

Noske threw artillery, heavy tanks, armoured cars, mortars, flame-throwers and aircraft against the workers and issued an order to shoot on the spot everyone found with weapons. During the March battles and the subsequent reprisals at least 1,200 were killed and several thousand arrested. Leo Jogiches, a prominent leader of the KPD, was shot in the Moabit prison.

The revolutionary struggle in Germany in the spring of 1919 had, according to Clara Zetkin, "a common axis of crystallisation" and was imbued "with one and the same will—socialisation. Councils and their power".³ A proletarian social content was more clearly expressed in it than before. In the mass strike struggles the demand for recognition by the employers and government of the right of production councils (works committees) was heard more and more loudly. These committees' struggle for the right to control over production and participation in management, i.e. for a demand that played a big role in development of the Russian Revolution, sometimes acquired a bitter character. In the Ruhr and in Central Germany, the communist paper wrote, the mining proletariat did not demand direct expropriation of the mineowners but so far only "control over management by elected organs, by the works and colliery Councils".

¹ *Vorwärts*, February 22, 1919.

² *Die Rote Fahne*, March 4, 1919.

³ *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, No. 9, 1920, p. 1273.

But this demand, it said, "was the first word of socialisation and the lackeys of capital answered at once with the capitals' last word: with guns and bullets".¹

Simultaneously with bloody suppression of the workers a demagogic campaign was launched under the slogan "Socialisation Forges Ahead". The Social-Democratic Minister of Labour Gustav Bauer introduced bills in the National Assembly to "socialise" and "control" the coal industry which did not, however, touch the matter of ownership of the means of production. Even one of the bourgeois politicians called them "twaddle in clauses", and Kautsky, chairman of the socialisation commission, resigned. The Social-Democratic leaders exerted much effort to convert the production councils into appendages of the trade unions, or even into instruments of the employers. The government agreed to include an article in the Constitution recognising the emasculated Workers' Councils, and introduced a corresponding bill in April.²

Although the German workers' battles of the spring of 1919 took place under the increasing political dominance of the bourgeoisie, they exceeded those of November-December 1918 and January 1919 in scale and intensity. But their former weaknesses were still inherent in them, viz., disunity and unconcerted actions, the absence of an integrated leadership and the ideological immaturity of many of the revolutionaries.

In April a new, even more powerful strike shook the Rhine-Westphalia industrial area. But the issue of the proletariat's gaining political power was only on the agenda in Bavaria. On February 21, a reactionary army officer assassinated the head of the government, the Independent Kurt Eisner. A storm of protest swept the country. The new government of the Social-Democrat Johannes Hoffmann had no standing. The idea of establishing Soviet power spread more and more among the workers. A group of Munich Independents and Anarchists yielded to the temptation to declare Bavaria a Republic of Councils. The Bavarian Communists, led by Eugen Leviné, a colleague of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, refused to take part in a Soviet Republic created behind the backs of the masses, "over a green conference table".³ Nevertheless Bavaria was proclaimed a Soviet Republic (*Räterepublik*) on April 7. The Independent Ernst Toller and the Anarchist Gustav Landauer did nothing real to implement the dictatorship of the proletariat, and Hoffmann's Government, fleeing to Bamberg, began to gather forces for a march on Munich.

¹ *Die Rote Fahne*, February 27, 1919.

² For more details see H. Habedank, *Um Mitbestimmung und Nationalisierung während der Novemberrevolution und im Frühjahr 1919*, Verlag Tribüne, Berlin, 1967, pp. 276-79.

³ R. Leviné, *Aus der Münchener Rätezeit*, Berlin, 1925, pp. 13-15.

The position was altered when reactionaries raised an armed mutiny in the city. The workers and some of the soldiers of Munich rose in united defence of the Soviet Republic. On their insistence Communists took the leadership on April 14 of a real, and not a fake, Soviet Republic. Although the situation for taking power remained unfavourable, they had no other choice but to head the masses' struggle and try and create a revolutionary government. Eugen Leviné became the soul of the government (Executive Committee). Stressing that a real victory of Council power was only possible on the scale of all Germany, the Communists declared their solidarity with all German workers, and with the Russian and Hungarian Soviet republics.

The Executive Committee began to carry out resolute reforms: it nationalised the banks and requisitioned part of the securities, established workers' control over industry, banned the paying of dividends and shares, granted small employers loans, introduced control over the distribution of food and carried out confiscations of stocks hoarded by the bourgeoisie. Measures were also taken to fight counter-revolution, profiteering and sabotage; the death penalty was established for illegal requisitioning and robbery. Steps, though inadequate, were taken to establish contacts with the peasants.¹

In his reply to greetings from the leaders of Soviet Bavaria, Lenin advised them to take immediately a whole series of general democratic measures in addition to dictatorial measures in relation to the overthrown bourgeoisie. These measures in the first place concerned the agrarian question: cancellation of mortgages, war taxes and rent for small peasants, transfer of big estates to the rural proletariat, free distribution of farm implements and machinery, raising of the pay of farm labourers, and ideological education in the villages. Lenin also advised an immediate improvement in the position of the urban popular masses: shortening the working day, a rise in pay for unskilled workers, resettlement of the poor in the apartments of the rich, use of stocks of clothing and food for the benefit of the workers, and the introduction of higher food rations for workers.²

Unfortunately, Lenin's advice did not reach the Bavarian Communists. The message was only received in Germany on April 28, when the Communists had already withdrawn from the government. Besides, their opportunities were very limited. From the very beginning the Soviet Republic had to concentrate its main efforts on defence. On April 15-16 the Munich workers and soldiers managed to defeat the enemy at Dachau and to extend the authority of the Coun-

¹ Hans Beyer, *Von der Novemberrevolution zur Räterepublik in München*, Berlin, 1957, pp. 97-108, 110-14.

² V.I. Lenin, "Message of Greetings to the Bavarian Soviet Republic", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 325.

cils to several other towns. But that was only a respite. Hoffmann's Government, having mobilised its own forces, appealed to the government of neighbouring Württemberg for help, and then to Prussia. On April 19 united reactionary forces led by Noske launched an offensive from all sides against the revolutionary towns of Southern Bavaria; a few days later Munich was completely blockaded.

When the situation became critical, the leaders of the Independents demanded that the Communists rescind several of the restrictions imposed on the bourgeoisie, which made the situation still more complicated. Though forced to withdraw from the government on April 27, Communists remained at the head of the Red Army. In bitter fighting, first on the approaches to Munich, and then in its streets, they battled heroically to the death. On May 3 all was over, but searches, arrests, and shootings continued for another whole week. Eugen Leviné was tracked down and arrested. His last words in court were: "I've long known that we Communists are all *dead men on leave*. I don't know whether you will still prolong my leave pass, or whether I'll join Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. You may kill me, my ideas will live on."¹ In spite of a storm of protests of the workers throughout Germany he was shot on June 5, 1919.

The Munich workers' bold attack on the foundations of bourgeois society, growing out of defensive fighting, was a most significant, though local, attempt to establish genuine proletarian power in Germany. In Clara Zetkin's words, the Bavarian Republic was "the culmination point of the fight between the bourgeoisie and the working class" in the revolutionary battles of 1918-1919.² But these attempts did not lead to a proletarian posing of the issue of power over the whole country, did not cause a crisis of all-German bourgeois power, and did not alter the character of the revolution in Germany.

After the defeat of the Bavarian workers and the other revolutionary centres the German workers' struggle subsided. A certain economic upswing in the middle of 1919 also fostered a recession in the masses' revolutionary activity. Industry absorbed some of the unemployed, and though wages did not keep pace with prices, they rose all the same, giving an illusion of economic improvement.

Nevertheless, neither repression, nor the wave of nationalism in the wake of the harsh Versailles Treaty, nor the campaign raised by the Social-Democratic leaders who declared the Weimar Constitution to be the most democratic in the world, forced the proletariat to lower its fighting banners. There were constant hunger marches.

¹ *Die Freiheit*, June 6, 1919 (morning edition); see also Eugen Leviné, *Skizzen, Rede vor Gericht und anderes*, Verlag der Jugendinternationale, Berlin-Schöneberg, 1925, p. 46.

² *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, No. 9, 1920, p. 1279.

which developed into bloody clashes with the police and troops. The strikes and street fighting in Chemnitz and especially in Upper Silesia, and also the strike of Berlin metal workers in the autumn of 1919 were all marked by great stubbornness.

The German Revolution remained bourgeois-democratic, it did not develop into a socialist revolution. Its tragedy, Ernst Thälmann wrote later, "consisted in the contradiction between the objectively mature revolutionary situation, on the one hand, and the subjective weakness of the German proletariat, on the other, caused by the absence of a Bolshevik Party with a clear goal. ... Neither the revolutionary instinct nor the incomparable heroism of the individual leaders of the Spartacus League, ... could make up for the absence of an iron vanguard, tempered to steel in the fire of revolutionary experience."¹

But, though the German Revolution did not solve the issues raised by history, it tempered the working class and brought it important gains because it was waged by proletarian means and methods. The social and democratic rights embodied in the Weimar Constitution offered more scope than the French or American constitutions for the activity of democratic parties, trade unions and other organisations of the working people and established universal suffrage and certain democratic freedoms. These were not, however, a gift from the bourgeoisie who retained a dominant position, but were wrung from it, won and defended by the revolutionary proletariat in stubborn battles. These battles had a great international impact. They helped Soviet Russia throw off the burden of the Treaty of Brest and to hold out in fierce battles with foreign imperialists. The greatest gain of the German working class was the creation in the fire of battle of a small but staunch and resolute Communist Party of Germany.

THE AUSTRIAN REVOLUTION

In Austria the revolution began on October 30, 1918 with a huge spontaneous demonstration of the workers and soldiers in Vienna. They moved on the Parliament Building where the Provisional National Assembly was in session. The demonstrators demanded the proclamation of a republic, and some the establishment of a government of Councils. The black-and-yellow banner of the monarch was torn down. But the Austrian parliamentarians did not decide for a republic. The Assembly only provisionally took on legislative functions handing over executive power to a State

¹ Ernst Thälmann, "November 9. 1918—die Geburtsstunde der deutschen Revolution", *Reden und Schriften zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 2, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1956, p. 13.

Council of representatives of three parties, headed by the Social-Democrat Dr. Karl Renner.

This compromise could not satisfy the mass movement. The next day revolutionary actions swept the country. Everywhere Workers' and Soldiers' Councils were set up, and stormy meetings were held in barracks and on public squares.

On November 12 all the factories of Vienna again stopped work, and tens of thousands of people gathered in front of the Parliament Building. The real danger of a general uprising of the workers and soldiers induced Renner to recognise that it was impossible to retain the monarchy. The Provisional National Assembly proclaimed Austria a democratic republic and declared that elections to a Constituent Assembly and local government bodies would be held on the basis of universal suffrage. At the same time the Assembly declared that "German Austria ... is a constituent part of the German Republic". The initiator of this step, Otto Bauer, who argued a thesis of the non-viability of an independent Austria, later said: "The workers at that time received the idea of union somewhat coldly."¹ The Anschluss of Austria and Germany was soon forbidden by the peace treaties.

The proclamation of a bourgeois-democratic republic did not pass without incident. When the new red-white-red flag was being hoisted, some soldiers rushed to the flagstaff and tore out its white centre. Speakers climbing up onto the statue of Pallas Athene called for rejection of the bourgeois republic, and for proclamation of power of the Councils and the dictatorship of the proletariat. A group of armed soldiers even tried to back this demand up by storming the Parliament Building and shooting. These actions, which the masses did not support, were exploited by the Social-Democratic leaders to discredit the revolutionaries, including those who, on November 3, 1918, founded a Communist Party of German Austria at a conference in Vienna. Within a week it had organised publication of a newspaper *Weekruf* (*The Call*). Nevertheless it remained in fact only a ginger group of revolutionaries numbering around 50 and with poor contact with the worker masses. Its main slogan, however, "All Power to the Councils!" and its revolutionary propaganda corresponded to the basic interests of the working class.²

The issue of power of the Councils or a Constituent Assembly was on the agenda in Austria, too. Its solution depended to a great extent on the position of the Social-Democrats. Friedrich Adler, who retained the halo of a revolutionary, freed from prison by the

¹ Otto Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution*, London, 1925, pp. 62, 64.

² H. Hautmann, *Die verlorene Räterepublik*, Vienna-Frankfurt-Zürich, 1971, pp. 84-85.

revolution and put at the head of the Vienna Workers' Council by the Social-Democrats, began immediately to oppose transforming it into a body of real power, declaring any extension of its functions to be "communist adventurism". Similar work was being carried out by Julius Deutsch and Julius Braunthal in the Soldiers' Councils, which were not united with the Workers' Councils. Many of the Soldiers' Councils remained under the influence of officers. In Linz, for instance, the elections were held by order of the military command, signed by the Social-Democratic Party and the two bourgeois parties, and in the Executive Committee of the Vienna Soldiers' Council only four of the 22 members were soldiers.¹

The theoretical grounds for the Social-Democrats' opposing establishment of power of the Councils were provided by Otto Bauer. On November 1, 1918 he declared at the Congress of the Social-Democratic Labour Party of Austria: "Many people are captivated by the idea that the methods of our Russian comrades, the Bolsheviks, could without much ado be transferred to Austria, that workers', peasants' and soldiers' councils could be formed and take over the government." But it would be impossible to maintain such a government in Austria. "Eight days after the attempt such a government would be bound to collapse through famine, because from the day such an attempt was made we would not receive any food from the peasants. The use of force against the peasants would only be possible in the neighbourhood of industrial towns; but little food could be collected that way and it would cause a bloody civil war."²

Whatever arguments the leaders of the Social-Democrats put forward to explain their rejection of a Council government, the true motive was fear of the spontaneous actions of the masses. But because they claimed the role of sole spokesmen of the proletariat's interests, these leaders did not come out openly against the Workers' Councils (in which there were only Social-Democrats). Holding back the creation of national organs of the Councils, they persuaded the workers that "an attempt to establish a Soviet dictatorship in Austria under existing circumstances would have signified nothing less than the suicide of the Austrian revolution".³ At the same time they tried to appease them by assurances that a social, proletarian revolution had already been carried through in Austria, and not just a democratic, national one, and that the whole "leadership of the nation passed to the proletariat" as a result. Its victory, moreover, they said, had been achieved, in Bauer's words, "not with

¹ *Geschichte der Kommunistischen Partei Österreichs. 1918-1955. Kurzer Abriss*, Vienna, 1977, pp. 27-29.

² F.L. Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe 1918-1919*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1972, pp. 31-32.

³ Otto Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

hand grenades or machine guns, but accomplished as an intellectual act, as the result of tactical and organising skill, which enabled the revolution gradually to establish its empire over the minds of the people".¹ Some of the workers fell for this propaganda.

Not only Social-Democratic politicians but also bourgeois leaders later admitted that in November 1918 the working class of Austria could have taken over political power. The Austrian bourgeoisie was demoralised by the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire, and frightened by the powerful spontaneous onslaught of the proletarian masses. The army was disintegrating and could not form counter-revolutionary units as in Germany. But the Social-Democratic leaders did not aspire to a break with the bourgeoisie, but sought co-operation with it on the basis of bourgeois parliamentarism.

The Social-Democrats heading the coalition government (Karl Renner became Prime Minister and Otto Bauer Secretary for Foreign Affairs) helped maintain the old state machinery and the economic positions of capital intact. The employers, it is true, had to agree to concessions: child labour was banned, an eight-hour day was introduced, production councils (works committees) received certain rights, benefits for the unemployed and disabled war veterans and sick insurance and paid holidays were established, and wartime laws were repealed. The Social-Democrat Julius Deutsch was briefed to carry out a democratisation of the army by purging it of extreme reactionaries and creating a Volkswehr in which the soldiers were to enjoy civil rights. Vague projects of socialisation were discussed (the state commission was headed by Otto Bauer).

The general elections to the National Assembly held on February 16, 1919 gave the bourgeois parties a majority (the same as in Germany). They got nearly 60 per cent of the vote, while the Social-Democrats got a bit more than 40 per cent. But the bourgeoisie entrusted the post of president to the Social-Democrat Karl Seitz and the coalition government was again headed by Karl Renner. To justify his thesis of a peaceful and gradual winning of political power by the party, Renner said: "Today we still cannot know how many years, how many decades this work will require."²

The Austrian workers, however, did not want to wait passively for the coming of better times. The grave food difficulties, and the growth of unemployment and poverty, kept causing spontaneous protests. In these conditions the Communists carried on agitation to turn the Workers' Councils into real revolutionary bodies. They succeeded in getting considerable influence in the Vienna Volkswehr; the 41st Battalion which called itself the Red Guard was commanded by Egon Erwin Kisch.

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

² *Der Kampf*, Vienna, February 1919, No. 2, pp. 71-73.

On March 1, on a proposal of the Workers' Council of Linz, an All-Austria conference of Workers' Councils was held in Vienna. The Social-Democratic Party, which had hitherto had a monopoly in the Councils, was forced to agree to re-elections. The leaders of the conference F. Adler and F. Austerlitz did not stint their declarations. The resolution passed said, for example, that the Councils' aim was to consolidate the results of the revolution and to take it further, including "*abolition of the capitalist mode of production*", that the Councils' job was "*to take a direct interest in politics*", and that the class struggle was "*the means of liberation of the working people*".¹ F. Adler wrote at the time: "Now that the proletariat is entering its decisive struggle, when it is a matter not only of democracy but of socialism, it is time to be aware that in the socialist sense it can only be *democracy of the working people*. Not only is the old saying 'He who does not work, neither shall he eat!' a maxim of socialist thinking; the demand 'He who does not work, neither shall he meddle in things!' is just as much one."²

The proclamation of a Soviet Republic in Hungary (and then in Bavaria as well) made a big impression on the workers of Austria. As Braunthal admitted, it "aroused their passionate wish to follow the example of the Hungarian comrades".³ But F. Adler replied to Soviet Hungary on behalf of the Vienna Workers' Council: "You have called on us to follow your example. We would gladly do so with all our hearts, but at this moment we unfortunately cannot. In our country there is no more food... We are therefore wholly slaves of the Entente."⁴ A similar reply was sent to Soviet Bavaria in April.

Many workers in Vienna, Graz and Linz understood the falsity of such statements. On March 22 there was a 40,000-strong demonstration of solidarity with Soviet Hungary in Vienna. At the beginning of April a contingent of Vienna workers and Volkswehr soldiers, numbering around 1,200 men, went to Hungary under the command of the type-setter Leo Rothziegel, a Communist, where it fought heroically against the interventionists. Rothziegel was killed in action near Debrecen in late April 1919. In the middle of April, at the call of Communists, the workers of Linz demonstrated, and the workers in Donawitz (Styria) took over control of Alpine steelworks. A demonstration of workers, unemployed and disabled in Vienna on April 17 led to clashes with the police.

¹ *Rätediktatur oder Demokratie?*, Vienna, 1919, p. 13.

² *Der Kampf*, May 10, 1919, No. 6, p. 259.

³ Julius Braunthal, *Die Arbeiterräte in Deutschösterreich. Ihre Geschichte und ihre Politik*, Vienna, 1919, p. 6.

⁴ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Vienna, March 23, 1919.

The Executive Committee of the Workers' Councils of Austria wrote in a May Day appeal that "the proletariat feels itself the decisive class in the state", that it was determined in all circumstances to exercise the corresponding influence, would not allow "a few representatives of exploiter capitalism in the National Assembly to rob it of its rights", and would not be hindered "by the mere chance of arithmetic" that gave the bourgeoisie the majority in the committees of the National Assembly.¹ This militant tone was a reflection of a situation in which the Austrian proletariat was again, as in November 1918, on the threshold of the struggle for power.

In the Councils themselves there were signs of acute dissatisfaction with the policy of the Social-Democratic leadership. A conference of Soldiers' Councils in Vienna, for instance, rejected a Social-Democratic resolution that contained attacks on the dictatorship of the proletariat, and refused to vote confidence in the Social-Democratic ministers. The influence of Communists grew markedly both in the biggest industrial centres (in late May the number of members of the KPÖ in Vienna, Wiener Neustadt and Neunkirchen reached 40,000) and in the Volkswehr. Otto Bauer wrote with alarm about this to Karl Renner on June 8, 1919. He also said that the leader of the British military mission in Vienna Colonel Sir Thomas Cuninghame had advised him and Julius Deutsch to take part in a "Soviet dictatorship", if one became inevitable, "otherwise there would be the same 'luny-bin' as in Budapest".²

In this situation the Austrian Social-Democratic leaders, having preserved unity of the Party on a centrist platform, displayed considerable flexibility. On the one hand, they continued to declare themselves supporters of revolutionary actions; the May Day appeal of the Executive Committee of the Councils was signed by F. Adler. On the other hand, Bauer, who headed the "socialisation" commission, was trying to reduce revolutionary tension by arguments about the road to socialism having to be gradual and cautious, and about "expropriation of the expropriators" not being possible via nationalisation or, "in the form of a crude confiscation of capitalist property and landed estates", but only by way of a well-ordered system of taxation.³ In May a bill on production councils was passed which switched them onto the rails of "functional democracy".⁴

Shortly afterwards the Social-Democratic Minister of the Interior Eldersch sanctioned a police provocation hitherto unknown in Austria. On June 14 armed police forced their way into the prem-

¹ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, May 1, 1919.

² F.L. Carsten, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-31.

³ Otto Bauer, *Der Weg zum Sozialismus*, Vienna, 1919, pp. 5-6, 8, 27.

⁴ Otto Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution*, pp. 138, 169-70.

ises of the KPÖ branch of the 9th District of Vienna and arrested 130 Communist officials. The aim was to disrupt a mass demonstration called for the next day. It was held just the same, with slogans "Establish Council Dictatorship", "Against Hunger and Sweating" and "For the Social Revolution". The police attacked the peaceful procession, 12 people were killed and 80 gravely injured, 8 of them dying soon after.¹

At the second conference of Austrian Workers' Councils, held in Vienna in late June and early July 1919, the Social-Democrats succeeded in strengthening their tactics of temporising with "ordered arms". When the Communists in the name of 4,000 demonstrators assembled in front of the town hall demanded that the Social-Democrats "leave the coalition government, [and] that the workers' councils seize power and establish a Soviet dictatorship", F. Adler parried the demand by citing the danger of Austria's disintegration.²

The Austrian Social-Democrats frustrated joint actions with Soviet Hungary. On June 16, 1919 Otto Bauer turned down Béla Kun's proposal for a personal meeting³ on the pretext that it would be evidence of a "conspiracy between Berlin, Vienna, Budapest and Moscow". This, combined with their policy of parrying the revolutionary forces in their own country won the Austrian Social-Democrat's recognition by the bourgeoisie as "saviours" of capitalism. Even the reactionary Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg later wrote that "the successful repulsion of the communist slogans and communist brute force in 1919 was a decisive service of the Social-Democrats".⁴ But the bourgeoisie paid the SAPÖ leaders with black ingratitude. As soon as the revolutionary wave subsided, their parties adopted a line of breaking up the coalition and ousting the Social-Democratic leaders from office. After the parliamentary elections of October 17, 1920 in which the Social-Democrats lost 200,000 votes and three seats, they left the government.

The bourgeoisie, having shaken off its fear of revolution, turned down outright all plans for "socialisation" and for "functional democracy" implemented by the Councils, which the Social-Democrats assured them could become the "means of awakening the initiative and encouraging the most fruitful kinds of spontaneous activity among the workers". In order to soften the pitiful result, the complete restoration of the bourgeoisie's dominance, Otto Bauer claimed that "in Austria the moderation of Social-Democratic leadership averted defeat from the proletariat and maintained its power unimpaired".⁵

¹ A. Reisberg, *Februar 1934*, Vienna, 1974, pp. 97-100.

² F.L. Carsten, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

³ F.L. Carsten, *Revolution in Mitteleuropa 1918-1919*, Cologne, 1973, p. 271.

⁴ Kurt Schuschnigg, *Im Kampf gegen Hitler*, Vienna, 1969, p. 108.

⁵ Otto Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution*, p. 187.

But in fact the main weapons, the Workers' Councils, were smashed, while the legend of the "people's republic" founded by the Social-Democrats did not stand the test of time. Bauer himself had to admit that years later.¹

Austria's example thus again demonstrated—for the third time already, after Finland and Germany—the need for a truly revolutionary proletarian party capable of leading the moving masses to decisive actions when a revolution has begun and is gathering considerable strength. A shaking bourgeois structure gets real chances to save itself when the workers' party is headed by leaders who argue about "pure democracy" and "universal freedom" but in fact suppress the proletariat's revolutionary activity—either violently or almost bloodlessly. Not only the victories of the revolution are instructive; so too are its failures.

THE HUNGARIAN SOVIET REPUBLIC

The bourgeois-democratic revolution began in Hungary simultaneously with the revolution in Austria. On the night of October 30, 1918 armed workers and soldiers led by Left Social-Democrats and revolutionary Socialists occupied the main strategic points and the government institutions in Budapest and freed political prisoners. The city was in the hands of the insurgent people. Only then did the king commission the leader of the National Council, Count Mihály Károlyi, to form a coalition government.

The bourgeois politicians and right-wing Social-Democrats (Ernő Garami and Zsigmond Kunfi) were undecided about giving up the monarchy. It took a powerful new onslaught by the revolutionary workers and soldiers for the National Council to proclaim Hungary people's republic on November 16, 1918. The Hapsburgs' centuries-long oppression was brought to an end, Hungary acquired national independence. But the government did not rush to give the people political rights, the nationalities equality, the peasants land, or the workers better conditions. The Social-Democratic leaders strove to hold back development of a mass revolutionary struggle. "It is hard for me, a convinced Social-Democrat, to declare it," Kunfi said, "but all the same I declare that we are against applying means of class struggle".

Meanwhile new, truly revolutionary organisations were emerging. On November 2 a Budapest Workers' Council was formed from leaders of the Social-Democratic Party of Hungary, the central council of trade unions and trade union locals. A day later, at a conference of

¹ Otto Bauer, *Zwischen zwei Weltkriegen? Die Krise der Weltwirtschaft, der Demokratie und des Sozialismus*, Bratislava, 1936, p. 193.

delegates from military units, the Budapest Soldiers' Council was reorganised and broadened. Peasants' Councils arose in several areas. Many of the Councils in which there were many workers, soldiers and labouring peasants came out for ending landowner and capitalist oppression and social injustice, for establishing workers' control over factories, and for granting the peasants land. In those Councils where the leadership was held by reformists the latter strove to confine the struggle to partial economic and social concessions. But under popular pressure the Councils pursued a more and more independent policy. The local ones began taking over power, repulsing the attacks of counter-revolutionary forces, and made attempts to establish workers' control over mills and factories.

On November 24, 1918 a Communist Party of Hungary was founded at a meeting in Budapest. At that time more than 300,000 ex-prisoners of war had returned home from Soviet Russia. Among them were members of the Hungarian group of the RCP(B), Ferenc Jancsik, Ernő Pór, Károly Vántus and others, led by Béla Kun. They formed the nucleus of the CPH, which was also joined by several Left Social-Democrats (Béla Vágó, Béla Szanto, László Rudas and others) and revolutionary socialists (Ottó Korvin, József Mikulik and others). Béla Kun was elected chairman of the Central Committee. On December 7 a newspaper *Vörös Ujság* (Red Gazette) began to appear. In January 1919 Tibor Szamuely, just returned from Soviet Russia, was co-opted into the Central Committee. The party called on the workers to arm themselves, to build and consolidate the Councils, to purge them of compromisers, and to form Red Guard units. It set up branches in enterprises, and in the boroughs and suburbs of the capital, and carried on work among the youth and in the army. It succeeded in gaining considerable influence in the Soldiers', Peasants' and, later, the Workers' Councils, especially in the biggest works of Csepel in Budapest, in the collieries, and in the Salgotarjan works. In the foreign policy, while the Károlyi Government was unsuccessfully seeking agreement with the Entente, the Communist Party came out for an alliance with Soviet Russia.

The government coalition of the liberal bourgeoisie and Social-Democrats vainly rushed from pillar to post in search of a way out of the economic and political cul-de-sac. Punitive squads were sent against the small peasants who had seized land—lord's land. In the town of Makó government troops attacked artillerymen who were under the influence of Communists. The government, losing standing among the people and trying to halt growth of the Communist Party's influence, resorted to violence. On February 21 police wrecked the newspaper *Vörös Ujság*, and jailed 57 members of the Central Committee and other functionaries, including Béla Kun who was badly beaten up. But repression did not achieve its aim.

At the beginning of March farm labourers and smallholders in the vicinity of Kaposvár seized the land of Prince Esterhazy, one of the biggest magnates of Hungary, and other landowners. Land was also seized in the counties of Somogy, Hajdú, Bihar, Fejér and Heves. On March 18 the workers of Csepel, the biggest industrial area of the capital, went on strike demanding release of the arrested Communists and transfer of power to the proletariat. The same day there were many demonstrations in honour of the anniversary of the Paris Commune, many with the slogan of immediate establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. On March 20, most of the papers did not come out because of a printers' strike. Many Workers' and Soldiers' Councils taking part in mass actions got rid of the influence of right-wing Socialists.

The old state machinery was being smashed. In the first half of March workers in several regions expelled the government commissioners running the counties and established the authority of the Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Councils, and where there were no Councils set up "directorates"—provisional revolutionary authorities. In many military units and formations the Soldiers' Councils removed reactionary officers. In Budapest the Workers' and the Soldiers' Councils became the *de facto* masters of the situation. In mid-March the demand for the formation of a Soviet Republic became universal. Panic and perplexity reigned in ruling circles, evidence of which was the self-liquidation of the Radical Party. A revolutionary crisis had matured in the country.

The Entente powers decided to block further development of the revolution by occupying the country. The head of their military mission, Lt. Col. Wicks on March 19, 1919, handed the government a note demanding withdrawal of Hungarian troops from a considerable part of the country. The ultimatum caused such a strong outburst of feeling among the whole population that the coalition government then in office, headed by D. Berinkey, resigned. Count Károlyi (who had become provisional President in January 1919) asked the right-wing leaders of the Social-Democrats to form a new government. But they, knowing how weak their following was among the masses, decided not to take office and sent a delegation to the imprisoned leaders of the Communist Party to talk about joint actions.

There had previously been negotiations between the Communists and left-wing Social-Democrats on uniting the two labour parties and forming a Soviet Republic. On March 11, 1919, at the request of the Social-Democrats, Béla Kun formulated 10 points that the communist leadership considered the basis for possible unity. In particular they proposed the following: withdrawal of representatives of the SDPH from the bourgeois government, ending of co-operation with the ruling classes and working to establish the authority of the

Councils of the Workers, Soldiers and Poor Peasants; rejection of the Hungarian nation's domination over other peoples; replacement of the parliamentary bourgeois republic by a republic of Councils that would liquidate the armed forces of the capitalist class, form a class army of the armed proletariat and create a new administration in place of the old government machinery. The document also set out programme tasks whose fulfilment would open the road to socialism. They included the institution everywhere of workers' control over production and distribution; nationalisation of industry, the banks and transport; the institution of a state monopoly of foreign and wholesale home trade; nationalisation of big land property; state-sponsored propaganda of socialist ideas; separation of Church and State.

On March 21, 1919 agreement was reached on the basis of these principles on the immediate unification of the Communist and Social-Democratic parties in a single Socialist Party of Hungary which took over power in the name of the proletariat. "To secure the power of the proletariat against the imperialists of the Entente," the text of the agreement said, "a full and sincere military and ideological alliance should be concluded with the Soviet Government of Russia."¹ The same day a session of the Budapest Workers' Council welcomed the agreement with great enthusiasm. Armed workers rapidly occupied the main strongpoints of the capital, disarming the remnants of the police and army. The Chief of Budapest Police estimated that the 700 police were opposed by 54,000 armed soldiers and workers.² The workers established full control over the city.

On March 21 Hungary was proclaimed a *Soviet Republic*. The government, the Revolutionary Governing Council, was headed by a Social-Democrat, Sandor Garbai; Béla Kun became People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. The government radioed to Moscow that the Hungarian proletariat, which had established its dictatorship, greeted Lenin as leader of the international proletariat and proposed the creation of "an armed alliance against all the enemies of the proletariat". The news was received in Moscow during the Eighth Congress of the RCP(B).³ In a return radiogram in the name of the congress, Lenin assured the Hungarian Government that "The working class of Russia is making every effort to come to your aid."⁴

The proletarian revolution triumphed peacefully, without bloodshed. That was possible because of the support for the socialist

¹ E. Liptai, *Az agység okmányai*, Budapest, 1968, pp. 4-5.

² L.N. Nezhinsky, *The Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919*, Moscow, 1969, p. 15 (in Russian).

³ *Minutes of the Eighth Congress of the RCP(B), March 1919*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1959, pp. 322-23, 336-37, 555, etc. (in Russian).

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 18-23, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 197.

revolution rendered by the broadest strata of the nation, including the army. The demoralised bourgeois-landowner camp, which had openly admitted its incapacity to govern the state, was isolated and had no forces to put up armed resistance.

Lenin immediately appreciated the international significance of a Soviet government in Hungary: "Short-sighted people, who found it exceptionally difficult to abandon routine and old habits of thought (even though they may have belonged to the socialist camp), imagined that this surprising swing towards proletarian Soviet democracy was due entirely to the peculiar conditions prevailing in Russia; they thought that perhaps the specific features of this democracy reflected, as in a distorting mirror, the peculiar features of former, tsarist Russia. If there was ever any foundation for such an opinion, there is certainly none whatever now... However great the difficulties which undoubtedly still face Hungary, we have achieved a *moral victory* in addition to a victory for Soviet power. A most radical, democratic and compromising bourgeoisie realised that at a moment of extreme crisis ... a Soviet government is a historical necessity, that in such a country there can be no government but a Soviet government, the dictatorship of the proletariat."¹

The Revolutionary Governing Council and the Socialist Party of Hungary defined the new state's most important aims in an open appeal to the nation, promulgated on March 22. All power was transferred to the central and local Councils. Their supreme body became the All-Hungarian Congress of Councils, and between its sessions the Federal Central Executive Committee. The local Councils were given broad jurisdiction. The elections to the Councils held in April 1919 were the first general election in the history of Hungary with a secret ballot, in which workers and peasants, women and young people over 18 took part (with the exception of those living on unearned income). In June the Congress of Councils adopted the Constitution of the Hungarian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic, which established that "The proletariat, having taken power, shall enjoy all liberties and rights in the Soviet Republic. It has liquidated the capitalist system and the domination of the bourgeoisie, replacing them by the socialist mode of production and a socialist social system."²

The Hungarian Soviet Republic implemented several radical social and economic reforms. Industrial enterprises employing more than 20 workers, the banks and savings banks, transport and trade companies and houses for rent in big towns were nationalised and put

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 223-24.

² János Kende, *Forradalomról forradalomra: Az 1918-1919-es forradalmak Magyarországon*, Budapest, 1979.

under the management of works' councils. A Council of National Economy, Jenő Varga its chairman, was set up to co-ordinate them. In the following weeks almost all the means of production, including small shops, were converted into public property, which created many economic and political difficulties. By a decree of April 3, 1919 all landed property in excess of 100 *holds* (57.5 hectares) was nationalised. That abolished landed proprietorship. But the poor peasants (who numbered more than a million) did not get land, since it was passed to the management of production co-operatives, which became *de facto* state farms.

Lenin warned the leaders of the republic especially against haste and going too far. The building of socialism, he said, called for a quite long transition period, not only because "the reorganisation of production is a difficult matter", but also "because the enormous force of habit of running things in a petty-bourgeois and bourgeois way can only be overcome by a long and stubborn struggle". Wavering was inevitable among working people shackled by petty-bourgeois habits. It was necessary to demonstrate in practice the advantages of proletarian power to the working class, the small peasants, and the farm labourers.¹ Only later did Béla Kun realise the importance of these warnings: "Tibor [Szamuely] and I thought that 'our agrarian policy is more intelligent than that of the Russians', for we did not divide up the big estates among the peasants, 'we are realising socialist production directly on a vast scale' relying in this on the agricultural workers.... Today this mistake is clear to all, or almost all."²

The Hungarian Soviet Government strove to improve the working people's conditions. An eight-hour working day was established. Real wages were raised on an average by 25 per cent for workers, and by 15 per cent for white-collar employees. Farm labourers' material conditions were improved. Equal pay for women and social insurance were introduced. The building of a single system of free health service was begun. The Church was separated from the state and the school from the Church; preparations were begun to institute universal free education, and a movement developed to abolish illiteracy. In Budapest alone more than 30,000 proletarian families were rehoused in the homes of the rich. Creches, kindergartens and homes for waifs and strays were opened in the mansions of the landowners and capitalists. Progressive cultural workers took the side of the workers' government.³

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Greetings to the Hungarian Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 388, 389.

² Béla Kun, *La République Hongroise des Conseils*, Éditions Corvina, Budapest, 1962, p. 416.

³ Béla Kun, *A Magyar Tanácsköztársaság művelődéspolitikája*, Budapest, 1959, pp. 7-128.

The endeavours of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, however, were carried out in conditions of ever increasing pressure from international and internal reaction. Influential imperialist circles were thoroughly alarmed by the rapturous response the emergence of Soviet Hungary evoked among the workers of Austria, Germany and other countries. Lloyd George wrote in a secret memorandum at the time: "The whole existing order in its political, social and economic aspects is questioned by the masses of the population from one end of Europe to the other."¹ The Supreme Allied Council sent General Smuts to Budapest with the secret mission of getting a quiet ousting of Communists from the government. An economic blockade was imposed on Hungary. France was pushing its neighbours to open armed intervention. On April 16 Romanian royal troops took the offensive in Transylvania, and on April 27 the Czechoslovak bourgeois army invaded from the northwest. At the beginning of May the position of the Soviet Republic became critical. Defeatist moods penetrated the government; the commander-in-chief of the Red Army Vilmos Böhm, a Social-Democrat, favoured cessation of resistance.

The working class led by the Communists rose to defend its government. At the beginning of May the Red Army was reorganised and 100,000 workers joined it. In addition to the Hungarian worker battalions, international units were formed from Austrians, Poles, Russians, Romanians, Czechs, Slovaks, Serbs and Croats. The Russian battalion of ex-POWs numbered more than a thousand and fought successfully at Salgótarján. A Ukrainian unit also took part in the actions. The interventionists' offensive was halted.

Fraternal relations were established from the very beginning between the Soviet Republics of Hungary and Russia. Diplomatic contacts were being made, steps were taken to establish economic ties, and a broad exchange of information was carried on. Budapest and Moscow maintained constant radio connections in spite of great technical difficulties. Soviet Russia gave Hungary military aid of every possible kind. When the Romanian troops began their offensive, Lenin suggested to Christian Rakowski, the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukraine, to organise a breakthrough near Bukovina and establish links with Hungary.² On May 13, in a message of greetings to the "growing Red Army of the Hungarian workers and peasants", he informed Béla Kun that Ukrainian troops had crossed the Dniester.³ Tibor Szamuely, who flew to Kiev at the

¹ David Lloyd George, *The Truth about the Peace Treaties*, Vol. 1, London, 1938, p. 407.

² V.I. Lenin, "Telegram to Kh.G. Rakovski", *Collected Works*, Vol. 44, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 213.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Telegram to Béla Kun", *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, Moscow, 1971, p. 509.

end of May and then went on to Moscow, agreed a plan of joint operations with Lenin.

Szamuely brought a message from Lenin back with him to Hungary, "Greetings to the Hungarian Workers", in which Lenin spoke of the need for the "swift and resolute use of force to crush the resistance of the exploiters, the capitalists, landowners and their underlings. Whoever does not understand this is not a revolutionary." At the same time he pointed out that "the essence of proletarian dictatorship is not in force alone, or even mainly in force." Rather it was in the organisation of "the advanced contingent of the working people, of their vanguard, of their sole leader, the proletariat". And the proletariat had to learn "to *lead* the peasants and the petty-bourgeois groups in general". Lenin addressed words of ardent support to the Hungarian workers: "You are waging the only legitimate, just and truly revolutionary war, a war of the oppressed against the oppressors, a war of the working people against the exploiters, a war for the victory of socialism. All honest members of the working class all over the world are on your side.... Be firm! Victory will be yours!"¹ This message, which quickly became known to broad strata of the populace, encouraged the revolutionary spirit of the working people in Hungary.

At the beginning of June the Hungarian Red Army was able to break the interventionists' ring and reached the Carpathians during the Northern Campaign. That created favourable conditions for an upsurge of the revolutionary movement in Slovakia. On June 16 a *Slovak Soviet Republic* was proclaimed in Prešov. A Government Council was formed in Košice, headed by a Communist, Antonín Janousek, who wrote to Lenin: "Dear Comrade, we are pleased to inform you that the Slovak proletariat has proclaimed a socialist Soviet republic."² Mills, factories and banks were declared nationalised, confiscation of landed estates began and a Red Army was formed. The Slovak Soviet Republic declared its solidarity with Soviet Russia, Soviet Hungary and the Czech proletariat. It viewed itself as the base for the fight for proletarian rule throughout Czechoslovakia.

On June 12 and 13 a congress of the Socialist Party of Hungary met in Budapest in an atmosphere of triumph. The congress adopted a new Party Programme. But contradictions developed (not for the first time) between the Communists and Left Social-Democrats on the one hand and the right wing on the other. The right-wingers demanded "moderation" of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Greetings to the Hungarian Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 388, 389, 391.

² *Proletarian Solidarity in the Struggle for Peace (1917-1924)*, Moscow, 1958, p. 117 (in Russian).

tried to remove Béla Kun, Tibor Szamuely and other active revolutionaries from the leadership. These were negative consequences of the fact that unity had been brought about without preliminary isolation of the right-wing leaders and the Communists were in fact dissolved in the bigger Social-Democratic Party. According to some reports, there were 30,000 to 45,000 Communists in March 1919 and more than 100,000 Social-Democrats.¹

Clouds soon gathered again over the republic. Clemenceau sent notes demanding that the Hungarian Red Army call off its offensive and withdraw behind the demarcation line. The Revolutionary Government decided to accept the conditions. On June 18 Lenin radioed to Béla Kun: "You are, of course, right in beginning negotiations with the Entente. They should be begun and carried on; it is necessary to make the fullest possible use of every opportunity to obtain a temporary armistice or peace, in order to give the people a breathing space. But do not trust the Entente powers for a moment. They are deceiving you, and are only attempting to gain time in order to be able to crush you and us."²

On June 30 the Soviet Government of Hungary, though it had received no real guarantees from the Entente, began a unilateral withdrawal of troops of the Northern Front, which led to the fall of the Slovak Soviet Republic. Romania, in contravention of its earlier assurances declared that it would only withdraw its troops after resignation of the Soviet Government.³ The Red Army's withdrawal damped its fighting spirit and discipline. Aurél Stromfeld, the commander-in-chief, resigned, considering it pointless to make further efforts to organise a defence.

Counter-revolutionaries came to life in the country. They provoked a strike of the Danube railwaymen, kulak uprisings and actions by monarchists and officers in the provinces and the capital. They were backed by the Anti-Bolshevik Committee in Vienna and the counter-revolutionary centre in Szeged. The uprisings were suppressed by militia squads led by Tibor Szamuely. In order to mobilise the working people for defence of the Republic compulsory military service and labour conscription were introduced. But they no longer managed to rouse the same national elan as there had been in May. At a session of the Central Executive Committee on July 15, Béla Kun said that the Republic was experiencing "a triple crisis: a crisis of power, an economic crisis and a moral crisis"³.

Meanwhile the Allied Supreme Command in Paris drew up a plan for military intervention. At the same time, the Social-Democrats

¹ *Legyőzhetetlen erő. A Magyar kommunista mozgalom szervezeti fejlődésének 50 éve*, Budapest, 1974, p. 22.

² V.I. Lenin, "To Béla Kun", *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, 1971, p. 512.

³ Béla Kun, *La République Hongroise des Conseils*, p. 218.

Vilmos Böhm, Jakab Weltner and Károly Peyer began secret negotiations in Vienna through Colonel Cuningham for capitulation of the Republic. The internal and external enemies of the revolution united to overthrow the government of the Councils. The new Chief of General Staff Ferenc Julier committed treason, throwing troops into an unprepared offensive on the Romanian Front, having previously informed the enemy of the military plans. The Romanian Army led by French officers was able to force the Tisza. And Soviet Russia because of Denikin's offensive on Moscow could not give revolutionary Hungary adequate military aid.

On August 1 the Soviet Government was forced to resign. Romanian troops entered Budapest. A "trade union" government headed by the right-wing trade union leader Gyula Peidl began to liquidate the agencies of the proletarian dictatorship and restored capitalist property. But it was short-lived, dissolved by counter-revolutionary monarchists only a few days later. The military dictatorship of Admiral Horthy was established in the country. A monstrous white terror hit the nation. Tibor Szamuely, Otto Korvin, Jenő László and many others were murdered. The number of victims was nearly 7,500, 70,000 were thrown into prison and concentration camps, and 100,000 were forced to emigrate. The Hungarian Soviet Republic fell under the united blows of the imperialists of the Entente and counter-revolutionary conspirators within the country.

In making a socialist revolution the Hungarian working class was one of the first in Europe to join hands with the Russian October Revolution and to link its fate with socialism. It created the first genuinely popular government in the country's history and carried out vital social, economic and cultural reforms. The 133 heroic days of the Soviet Government in Hungary were the highest achievement of the proletariat of Central Europe. The successes of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, and also its mistakes and even its defeat enriched the revolutionary experience of the international labour movement.

THE STRUGGLE IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

The revolutions in the centre of Europe, in Germany, Austria and Hungary had a great impact on the liberation movement in neighbouring countries. The rise of new states in Central and Southeastern Europe took place in a situation of a heightened revolutionary struggle in which the main force was the working class.

The national liberation movement in *the Polish lands* that had been partitioned at the end of the 18th century between three powers found real soil when the October Revolution in Russia proclaimed

the right of nations to self-determination and the Soviet Government issued a special decree abrogating all the treaties of the former Russian Empire on the partition of Poland.

The Kingdom of Poland, occupied by German and Austrian troops, was the centre of the revolutionary movement in the Polish lands. In October 1918 the miners of the Dąbrowa basin began a strike that developed into a general one. The strikers demanded abolition of the occupation authorities and dismissal of the Regency Council they had set up, the convening of a Sejm, and release from the Magdeburg fortress of Józef Pilsudski, the right-wing leader of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS Faction).

In the Polish lands held by the Austro-Hungarian Empire the populace came out onto the streets at the end of October 1918 and began to disarm the soldiers. The demonstrations and strikes developed into a fight against the occupation authorities, in which the proletariat came to the fore. On the wave of the revolutionary movement a Provisional National Government was formed in Lublin on November 7 from members of left parties headed by Ignacy Daszyński, leader of the Social-Democratic Party of Galicia and Silesia. It proclaimed a Polish state and promised to convene a Constituent Sejm and to carry out broad democratic reforms.

The revolution in Germany speeded up the events. On November 11, the populace disarmed soldiers of the German occupation forces in Warsaw. The Regency Council was forced to transfer military authority to Pilsudski, just released. On November 14, he became "provisional head of state".

Several days later a "workers' and peasants' government" was set up in Warsaw headed by the right-wing Socialist J. Moraczewski. The upsurge of national patriotism embraced the broadest strata of the Polish nation who pinned their hopes for political and socio-economic reforms on a united independent state and a Constituent Sejm mandated to carry out democratic reforms.

Right from the start, the vanguard of the proletariat set about forming its own revolutionary bodies, Councils of Workers' Deputies. The first Councils had arisen underground during the mass strikes back in January 1918. At the beginning of November the workers of the Dąbrowa coalfield elected a Council. On November 5 a Council of Workers' Deputies was formed in Lublin, and three days later in Dąbrowa-Górnica. On the 6th a "peasants' republic" arose in the area of Tarnobrzeg. Before long, more than 100 Councils were functioning in the country (mainly in the former Kingdom of Poland). By means of strikes they succeeded in achieving an eight-hour working day and a number of social rights. The workers demanded the starting up of enterprises, organisation of public works and payment of unemployment relief. The strike movement in support of the

Councils' decisions grew. Whereas there had been 28 strikes in Warsaw in the 10 months of 1918, in December 1918 and January 1919 alone there were 14.¹ The workers tried to establish control over plants. The old trade unions were revived and quickly made members, and new unions emerged.

A tense struggle developed in the Councils. Polish internationalists returning home from Soviet Russia and having learned skills of class struggle and organisation of proletarian rule there, worked actively in them. From the total of 7,700 repatriates named in the *Book of Poles Participating in the October Revolution*, more than half returned home at the end of 1918 and in 1919. According to incomplete data a third of them had taken part in the October armed uprising in Petrograd or in Moscow and had belonged to squads of the Red Guard; nearly one in two had fought in the Red Army or in partisan detachments, and one in four had been a member of a Soviet or one of the staff, or worked in the staff in Revolutionary Committees and other bodies.²

The revolutionary parties, Social-Democracy of Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, and the Polish Socialist Party (Lewica), hoped that the Councils of Workers' Deputies would be instrumental in consolidating the left forces of the labour movement, with the Councils themselves turning into organs of revolutionary power. But all the parties that enjoyed influence in the working class, including right-wing ones, became involved in the forming of Councils.

An All-Polish Congress of Councils was not convened because of the opposition of reformists, and therefore no united leadership was formed. The right-wing leaders of the PPS Faction, who headed most of the Councils, including that of Warsaw, oriented them on support of the government and preparation of elections to the Sejm. Only in the Dąbrowa coalfield, the heart of worker Poland, did the workers, relying on the Red Guard they had formed, control the situation for a certain time.

On December 16, 1918, at the Unity Congress of the revolutionary parties, Social-Democracy of Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania and the Polish Socialist Party (Lewica)—a Communist Workers' Party of Poland (PKPR) was formed. The Party Programme set the task of fighting for power of the Councils, the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism. But it failed to define such transitional demands that would draw the masses into struggle for socialism, including an agrarian programme aimed at uniting the working class and the

¹ T. Szturm de Sztrem, *Walka o place zarobkowe*, Warsaw, 1922, p. 15.

² I.S. Yazhborovskaya, "On Certain Aspects of the Impact of the October Revolution on the Content, Direction and Forms of the Class Struggle in Poland (1918-1923)", *Soviet-Polish Relations. 1918-1945*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 26-28, 49 (in Russian).

labouring peasantry. The young Communist Party, while exposing the nationalism of the PPS and other organisations, did not overcome the errors characteristic of its predecessors. It rejected both the right of nations to self-determination and demands linked with the formalisation of Polish statehood. Meanwhile, as Lenin once again emphasised in March 1919, the revolutionaries should not have repudiated the principle of self-determination of the Polish nation and talked of self-determination of the working people since the majority of the Polish workers still shared "the standpoint of social-defencism, social-patriotism".¹ The outlook for the growth of the proletariat's class consciousness was linked with full realisation of the national tasks. The resolution passed by the PKPR to boycott the Sejm elections weakened its position and deprived it of the chance to use the new election campaign for broad propaganda of its programme among the masses.

In January 1919 the bourgeois government of Ignace Paderewski came into office. In the Sejm elections on January 26, 1919, the right-wing bourgeois and landlord parties got a majority. That was evidence that the broad masses of the urban and rural working people put great reliance on the Sejm, and trusted the Polish bourgeoisie, which had not yet exposed itself in their eyes.

The government, having consolidated its position, brutally suppressed the strikes in Warsaw, Żyrardów, Częstochowa and the Dąbrowa coalfield, and instituted a state of emergency and martial law on April 1. The PPS, which consolidated itself as a united party operating throughout Poland, rejected the Communists' proposals for a joint fight to establish a republic of Councils and for general arming of the workers, and later split the Councils. That enabled the government to dissolve them in the summer of 1919 and intensify white terror in worker centres. The preliminary act on the Fundamentals of Land Reform adopted by the Sejm reduced the scale of the peasant movement for some time.

The formation of the *Czechoslovak Republic* at the end of October 1918 as a result of a powerful upsurge of the liberation movement was a great gain for the Czech and Slovak nations, which had suffered foreign oppression for several centuries. The working class played a decisive role in the struggle, but it was unable to lead the democratic and national revolution. Czechoslovakia arose as a capitalist state, in which the Czech bourgeoisie captured the dominant position. The Provisional National Assembly confirmed a Provisional Constitution on November 13 and proclaimed the Czechoslovak Republic the next day. Tomáš Masaryk was elected President; and the first national coalition government was headed by Karel Kramář.

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 18-23, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 175.

At the end of 1918 the working class called a series of successful strikes, winning a reduction of the working day to 8 hours, recognition of trade union rights, new collective agreements that provided for a raising of wages and extension of social security. The National Assembly proclaimed freedom of the press and assembly, and the right to strike. It even promised the establishment of workers' control over production. The bourgeois rulers cited these measures as proof of their capacity to meet the working people's just demands. In unison with them, right-wing Social-Democratic leadership claimed that a decisive step towards socialism had been made in the country. "We are in our own home," the newspaper *Právo lidu* wrote, "we are the masters of our own fate ... a nation without class differences, without property barriers and privileges of any kind."¹ These statements disoriented the workers and led to a temporary recession of the labour movement in the country and to the strengthening of the position of the bourgeoisie.

The right-wing leadership of the Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Labour Party (CSDLP) pursued a policy of class collaboration, which it justified by the need to consolidate the young republic and gradually advance to socialism. "We shall not imitate the Bolshevik methods in Russia, we shall not reject winning political power by the proletariat by way of evolution and enlightenment of the people," the leader of the right wing, Anton Nemec, declared at the party congress in December 1918. The congress, which had a considerable majority of right-wingers, laid it down that the party's most important job was to carry out social reforms in collaboration with the bourgeois parties.² Representatives of the CSDLP joined the government, and from the summer of 1919, after the party got more than 30 per cent of the votes in the municipal elections, the Social-Democrat Vlastimil Tusar became head of the government of a "Red and Green" coalition.

This course of the leadership led to growing dissatisfaction within the party. A revolutionary wing began to take shape in both the CSDLP and the ethnic (Czech and German) Social-Democratic organisations. From February 1919 it began to publish *The Social-Democrat* weekly in Prague, which carried the sub-title "A Newspaper for the Promotion of Workers' Class Consciousness". The workers' aim, its first issue said, should be a socialist, not a bourgeois-democratic republic.³ The Social-Democratic papers appearing in Kladno, Ostrawa, and Brno began to join the left trend. Czechoslovak inter-

¹ *Právo lidu*, Prague, 29 October, 1918.

² *Protokol XII řádného sjezdu Československé socialně demokratické strany dělnické, konaného ve dnech 27.-30. prosince 1918 v Representačním domě v Praze*, Prague, 1918, pp. 29-30, 209.

³ *Socialní demokrat*, 1919, No. 1.

nationalists who had formed the Czechoslovak Section of the RCP(B) in Soviet Russia (9,600 members) and had a wealth of experience of revolution and civil war, played an active role in the left trend on returning home.

A new revolutionary upswing began in the spring of 1919. A major event was the action of the working class of the mining area of Kladno, where there was a militant Social-Democratic organisation led by Antonín Zápotocký. Big meetings, demonstrations and mass strikes were held in protest against the arrest of revolutionaries and the banning of meetings. The workers demanded not only an improvement in their conditions but also nationalisation of key industries. On April 19, 1919, 350 representatives of industrial workers and 150 representatives of other sections of working people decided to set up a Workers' Council. It rapidly developed vigorous activity: it intervened in matters of supply and pay, instituted a six-hour day on Saturdays for miners, organised strikes and political demonstrations. But its opportunities within the framework of bourgeois democracy were very limited, and the Council gradually came to nothing.

Differentiation of the CSDLP continued and led to the organising of a revolutionary left wing at the end of the year. A conference in Prague on December 7, 1919, adopted a programme statement of the Marxist Left in which it set the aim of realising, in theory and practice, the principles of Marx's teaching which the opportunist leadership had abandoned.¹ Under the ideological influence of the Marxist Left, who called on representatives of the other national republics to form a joint group and demand the early convening of a party congress, an international organisation of Slovak, Ukrainian, Hungarian and German workers began to take shape in Slovakia and the Transcarpathian Ukraine.

In the liberation of the *Southern Slav nations* from the Hapsburg monarchy the decisive role was played by strikes in industrial centres, peasant uprisings and armed actions by soldiers. But the weak and disunited working class was unable to head the spontaneous popular movement, and the bourgeoisie united the Yugoslav lands under the aegis of Serbian monarchist circles. On December 1, 1918 the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the future Yugoslavia, was proclaimed. That represented a historic advance for the Southern Slav nations. Many obstacles were removed from their path of economic, cultural and educational development. But as a result of the counter-revolutionary forces' victory, new forms of national oppression arose in royalist Yugoslavia and conditions were preserved for the operation of foreign imperialism.

¹ *Založení Komunistické strany Československa*, Sborník dokumentu, Prague, 1954, pp. 42-43.

The labour movement continued to develop on an ascending line. the heat of the struggle increased, class clashes became more frequent and involved ever broader sections of the proletariat. The workers stubbornly fought for an 8-hour working day, the right to collective bargaining, legalisation of the reviving trade unions, and pay rises, for democratic reforms and against police tyranny. In spite of bans and the military measures taken by the bourgeois government, the workers of all the towns of Yugoslavia demonstrated with such slogans on May Day 1919.

In July the working class foiled the attempt of the Entente imperialists and their bourgeois-monarchist agents in Belgrade to send the Yugoslav army against Soviet Hungary. A protest strike against intervention in Russia and Hungary hit all industry and trade, the railway, sea and river and urban transport, and the post, telegraph and telephone services. The employees of many banks and offices joined in. The ferment already under way in several army units grew, under the impact of the workers' action, into spontaneous mutinies of the soldiers in Varaždin and Maribor on July 22 and 23.

The lack of contact among the working class party and trade union organisations and the different conditions in which they developed made the unification of the labour parties on a revolutionary basis difficult.

In late 1918 and early 1919, several groups of Southern Slav Communists, ex-POWs who had taken an active part in the civil war in Russia and had joined the Southern Slav group of the RCP(B), returned from Soviet Russia, surmounting great difficulties. In early March 1919, Vladimir Čopić, Nikola Kovačević, and Nikola Grulović formed the militant communist organisation Vasso Pelagić (so named after the Serbian Populist revolutionary of the late 19th century) in Vojvodina. It represented the beginning of the Yugoslav Communist Party, and local Left Socialists joined it.

In April 1919 a unity congress was convened in Belgrade on the initiative of the Serbian Social-Democratic Party and the Social-Democratic Party of Bosnia and Hercegovina. It was attended by representatives of the Serbian, Bosnian, and Dalmatian Social-Democratic parties and delegates of the left wing of the Socialists of Croatia and Vojvodina. The socialist organisations of Macedonia were represented by 20 delegates, and Montenegrin Socialists were also present. The Yugoslav Communist Party (the Pelagicians) had 20 votes.¹ Only Slovenia, where the Left did not venture to break with the opportunist leadership, was not represented. The congress adopted the programme resolution "The Principles of Unity" that

¹ E. Hasanagich, *The 1st Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia*. Belgrade, 1956, p. 10 (in Serbian).

announced the formation of a Socialist Labour Party of Yugoslavia (Communists)—the SLPY(C). The congress delegates proclaimed their solidarity with the Russian and Hungarian working class, and appealed to Yugoslav soldiers "to frustrate the criminal attempts to stifle the gains of these two revolutions, that our counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie is planning".¹

The congress resolutions bore the stamp of a compromise between revolutionary and opportunist lines, a result of the influence of centrists. The main resolution, "The Principles of Unity", consisted of two heterogeneous parts, one taken from the Erfurt Programme, the second consisting of communist slogans about the socialist revolution, smashing of the old government apparatus, and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Councils.² The Practical Action Programme, the Rules, and the resolution on the agrarian question also had a dual character. They did not reflect the development of new forms of national oppression by the Great Serbian bourgeoisie in the newly founded state.

Both the party of the working class and the trade unions grew rapidly. In the second half of 1919 the SLPY(C) had at least 50,000 members, and the trade unions under its leadership had around 250,000 members. At the end of 1919 the Young Communist League of Yugoslavia was founded. Hundreds of thousands of unorganised urban and rural workers supported the party. The ruling bourgeois circles, under the pressure of the workers' strike struggle and the impact of the international situation, had to make concessions, in September an act on the 8-hour working day was passed.

The revolutionary upsurge in *Romania* was considerably stimulated by the events in neighbouring countries, Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In the autumn of 1918 Romanian workers in Transylvania took an active part in the liberation struggle against the Hapsburgs. Their actions had a mass character in Arad, Cluj, Braşov and Timişoara, where Councils were set up. On December 1, 1918, at a mass meeting in Alba Iulia, demands were made for the unification of Transylvania and Romania. The bourgeois leaders at the head of the unity movement opposed the republican sentiments of the working people and thereby made it possible for the Romanian monarchy to survive.

After the withdrawal of German occupation troops from Romania in November 1918 the workers' struggle became openly offensive. The Social-Democratic Party, banned during the occupation, became legal again. At the demand of the majority of its branches it began to call itself Socialist from November 1918. The position of the Left

¹ *The Historical Archive of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia*, Vol. II, Belgrade, 1949, p. 24 (in Serbian).

² *Ibid.*, pp 11-12.

within the party became stronger. On December 13, 1918, 50,000 Bucharest workers, led by Left Socialists, demonstrated under the slogans "Long Live Socialism!", "Long Live Republic", "Down with the King!", "Down with the Bourgeoisie!". Troops were ordered to fire on them. Hundreds were killed, wounded and arrested as a result, and many of those arrested died in prison.¹ The repression spread throughout the country. In spite of the manoeuvring of the ruling classes—the electoral reform introduced in December 1918, the promise of agrarian reform, and the institution of an 8-hour day in most factories—the workers did not cease their struggle. In the spring and summer of 1919 there was a strike of 20,000 railwaymen; in July workers in several towns supported the oil workers' general strike, donating a day's pay to them. Altogether, the strikes involved more than 150,000 persons in 1919, three times as many as in the preceding year. The strike of 200,000 workers in July, protesting against Romanian armed intervention in Soviet Hungary and Soviet Russia, was a major political event.

The position of the ruling classes remained precarious. The capitalist-landlord government did not succeed in halting the upsurge of the revolutionary movement or in coping with its external political difficulties. Under the postwar peace settlements Romania was given Transylvania, Bukovina and Dobruja (including the illegally occupied areas of Northern Bukovina and South Dobruja). Romania also seized Bessarabia. As a result its area was more than doubled, from 138,000 square kilometres to 295,000, and its population increased from 7,800,000 in 1915 to 16 million in 1920.² The country's industrial potential increased by 135 per cent over the 1915 level, and the industrial proletariat rose to 550,000.³

The newly annexed areas were disparate in their economic development and in the level and character of their labour movement. This faced Romanian revolutionary Socialists with the job of rallying the workers and creating a united revolutionary party. A struggle developed within the Socialist Party in 1919 between the revolutionaries and the opportunists over vital issues of its programme, during which the position of the Left was gradually consolidated.

By the terms of the armistice *Bulgaria* was in fact occupied by Entente troops. In spite of that the working class continued its struggle. A major event was a strike (July 1-2, 1919) by 7,000 miners of Pernik led by Georgi Dimitrov. That year twice as many workers took part in strikes as in the ten prewar years. Although the authorities repeatedly used police and troops against the workers, they could

¹ Gh. Unc, C. Mocanu, *13 decembrie 1918*, Bucharest, 1968, pp. 106, 141, 159.

² *Situația clasei muncitoare din România*, Bucharest, 1966, p. 87.

³ *Studii privind istoria economică a României*, Vol. 1, Bucharest, 1961, p. 141.

not stop the movement. Employers were often forced to make concessions, because the workers had learned to pool their efforts. In the summer they were able to win passage of a bill on the 8-hour working day, although the employers only observed it under strong pressure from the masses. The railwaymen (among whom reformist organisations had great influence) were also drawn into the struggle.

The Party of Narrow Socialists (Tesnyaki) put forward a number of democratic demands at the end of 1918: a political amnesty, trial of war criminals, confiscation of the property of profiteers, return of war prisoners. In May 1919 at its 22nd Congress, the Workers' Social-Democratic Party of Bulgaria (Narrow Socialists) was renamed the Bulgarian Communist Party—BCP(NS). The programme unanimously adopted oriented the party on proletarian revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat. But the congress did not criticise the party's mistaken stand during the Vladai insurrection; an understanding of the necessity of an alliance of the working class and the working peasantry was not yet reached.

The Bulgarian proletariat more and more resolutely passed from economic strikes to political struggle. On July 27, on the eve of the elections to the National Assembly, the Communists sponsored a mass political demonstration throughout the country. Among its demands were "Bread, Housing, Work!", "End the State of Emergency and Censorship!", "Workers' Control over Factories!", "Socialisation of the Banks, Industrial Enterprises and Big Estates!" and the introduction of a progressive tax system with exemption of the poor. This demonstration provoked a very acute political crisis, and the authorities again resorted to the aid of the Entente occupation army. At the elections on August 17 the BCP(NS) had a big success, getting nearly 120,000 votes (18.7 per cent) and winning 47 seats in the National Assembly.

In the autumn of 1919 the strike movement involved a large number of factories and new sections of workers. The owners of textile mills of Sliven and tobacco factories of Haskovo, not wanting to make concessions to the strikers, declared a lockout. In Sofia the funeral of three workers killed by the police grew into a mass demonstration. On December 24, the day the National Assembly opened, government, district and communal institutions in Sofia and other towns were closed. Industrial workers, clerks and some of the urban petty bourgeoisie took to the streets demanding restoration of civil liberties, improvement of the workers' conditions and an end to repression. The government responded by declaring a state of emergency in the capital. Its threat to sack all public workers and employees who took part in the demonstration only exacerbated the situation. A strike began in transport and the communications system, which grew into a general strike on December 27.

On the initiative of the Communist Party and the revolutionary trade unions the first general political solidarity strike in the history of the Bulgarian working class was called, which lasted a week. In order to break it the authorities used the police and armed squads of the peasant Orange Guard (set up by the leaders of the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union, prompted to it by bourgeois reactionaries). The Broad Socialists negotiated with the authorities behind the strikers' backs. And the Entente army gave the government direct support.

The acute crisis which threatened to grow into a fratricidal war impelled the BCP(NS) to call on the workers on January 3 to stop the general strike. The transport workers had been on strike for 55 days in spite of arrests, beatings and murders. The Bulgarian proletariat had to retreat. The main reason for the failure was the absence of unity between workers and peasants. And there was not sufficient cohesion in the ranks of the proletariat itself. Nevertheless the Bulgarian working class had tested the strength of its revolutionary offensive and gained valuable experience of mass battles.

* * *

The working class of the countries of Central and South-eastern Europe came out as the vanguard of the national liberation, democratic revolutions in 1918-1919, but did not succeed in bringing them under its leadership. The bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations, which still had a certain democratic potential, managed to assume the leadership over the movement for national statehood and to block further development of the revolution. In order to forestall the proletariat's intention to exploit the mass upsurge to continue and deepen the social struggle, bourgeois circles, supported by right-wing Social-Democrats, resorted, along with brutal repressive measures, to partial concessions to the workers and promised the peasants to deal with the agrarian problem.

The working class and other sections of the working people, having given the strike movement a political character and employed several new forms and methods of struggle and organisation, won a certain improvement in their condition: a shorter working day, social legislation and a strengthening of the position and rights of the trade unions. The main political result of the upsurge after the Socialist Revolution in Russia was a strengthening of the position of Soviet Russia, intensification of the revolutionary trend in the labour movement and the creation of militant Communist parties in all the countries of the region.

THE SOCIAL BATTLES IN WESTERN EUROPE AND THE USA

The world war had hardly ended when it became evident that anti-war actions had not been an end in themselves for the working class, but a natural manifestation of the class struggle. The transition from wartime to peacetime strengthened, rather than weakening it. Soldiers and sailors were demanding immediate demobilisation. The workers did not agree to bear the main burden of the reconversion of industry, and demanded as a minimum a just sharing of it, urgent measures against unemployment and hunger and implementation of the promises that the ruling classes had been so lavish with during the war. The revolutionising impact of the October Revolution in Russia and the European revolutions was strongly felt in the advanced capitalist countries. Although the class battles did not become so acute there as in Central and Eastern Europe, the scale of the labour movement went far beyond that of prewar years.

The weakest link in the victorious camp of the Entente imperialist powers was *Italy*, where a revolutionary crisis had matured. The system of the liberal-bourgeois state was paralysed; the Liberals proved incapable of governing in the old way. The bourgeoisie had not succeeded in achieving its foreign policy plans by involving the country in the war. The Italian "poor man's imperialism" also revealed its internal weakness. The devastation of rich northern provinces, the disorganisation in industry and transport, the impoverishment of agriculture, the high cost of living, inflation and mass unemployment further aggravated the economic, social and political conflicts. Moreover, the major firms (Ilva, Ansaldo, FIAT) which had increased their capital and profits were trying to shift the whole burden of the transition to peacetime production onto the workers.

At the end of 1918 the masses were roused and moved into action. Industrial workers, railwaymen, civil servants, farm hands and landless and land-hungry peasants took part in stormy actions. In the spring of 1919, particularly stubborn strikes, in which economic demands were interwoven with political ones, broke out in the industrial triangle of Milan-Genoa-Turin. In Milan the breaking up of a meeting by the police, in which a worker was killed, precipitated a mass strike. In Rome a general strike flared up in protest at the banning of a meeting of solidarity with the Russian and German revolutions. Lenin had every ground to observe: "The Italian people understand what the Russian '*Sovietisti*' are, what the programme of the Russian '*Sovietisti*' and the German Spartacists is."¹

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Founding of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, 1977, p. 482.

May Day strikes, meetings and demonstrations took place in 1919 under the slogan "Follow Russia's Example! Long Live Socialism!". Clerical workers, engineers and technicians took part in the actions together with blue-collar workers. In the North, a strike struggle was waged by agricultural workers organised in Red Leagues. A spontaneous peasant movement in Southern Italy and the Lazio region developed, with former front-line soldiers who began to occupy untilled or badly farmed land especially active in it. A wave of food riots swept the towns.

According to the official data there were 1,871 strikes in 1919 (six times as many as in 1918). The number of strikers rose to 1,555,000 (a tenfold increase), and the number of man-days lost was more than 22 million (nearly 25 times as many). In industry 53.6 per cent of the strikes were won, and in agriculture 48.6 per cent. Textile workers, steel workers, metal workers, and shipbuilders were in the front ranks of the strikers.¹

The metal workers were the best organised. On February 20, 1919 the Federation of Metal Workers (FIOM), affiliated to the General Confederation of Labour (CGL), signed an agreement with the employers introducing an 8-hour day. After a tense struggle other industrialists were forced to make the same concession. The workers were also fighting for wage increases. 200,000 metal workers of Lombardy, Emilia and Liguria struck for two months for that purpose. But the increases won were soon swallowed up by the rise in the cost of living.

The trade unions grew during the strike struggle. Membership of the General Confederation of Labour had quadrupled by the end of 1919 compared with the previous year and passed the million mark. The Italian Trade Union Association led by anarchists and the Railwaymen's Union, both often acting together with the CGL, also grew. The Italian Confederation of Working Men (CIL) founded in 1918 and uniting "White" (Catholic) unions rejecting the principle of class struggle, numbered around a million members in 1920. The total number of organised workers was 3,800,000 (almost five times the prewar number).²

In trying to blunt the edge of the workers' dissatisfaction the government undertook measures to protect labour and hiring conditions. A decree was published granting peasant co-operatives the neglected and untilled lands they had seized, on condition of their compensating the previous owners. The price of bread was reduced, and the suffrage was broadened. But these reforms could no longer satisfy the revolutionary mood of the masses in the conditions of

¹ *Annuario statistico del lavoro*, Rome, 1949, pp. 386-87.

² Giorgio Candeloro, *Il movimento sindacale in Italia*, Edizione di cultura sociale, Rome, 1950, p. 94.

postwar Italy. Evidence of the shift that had taken place in the workers' consciousness was the parliamentary election in November 1919. The traditional bourgeois parties suffered a serious defeat, losing their absolute majority and getting only 36 per cent of the seats. The Catholic Popular Party (Partito Popolare), associated with the White trade unions and campaigning under slogans of democratic reform, got around 20 per cent of the seats. The Italian Socialist Party (PSI) had the biggest success, getting 1,756,000 votes (six times the prewar number) and more than 30 per cent of the parliamentary seats (156 out of the 499). That indicated the existence of favourable conditions for further development of the mass revolutionary struggle.

The success of that struggle depended to a decisive extent on Italian Socialists' capacity to turn the proletariat, ready to fight, into the truly leading force of the nation. In March 1919 the PSI leadership, under the influence of the Maximalists who had already declared the need for a socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat in December 1918, decided to break with the Second International. The decision was confirmed by the 16th Congress of the Party in Bologna in October 1919. The new programme spoke of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the creation of Soviets. A resolution moved by Serrati, who was not only the editor of *Avanti!* but also began to publish the journal *Comunismo*, expressed the belief that "the proletariat should resort to violence in order to resist the violence by the bourgeoisie and consolidate the gains of the revolution".¹ At the same time the ideologically heterogeneous majority of the Maximalists continued to oppose a break with the reformists. Lenin noted in that connection: "There is no doubt that the overt and the covert opportunists, who are so numerous among the parliamentarians in the Italian Party, will try to circumvent and nullify the Bologna resolutions. The struggle against these trends is by no means over."²

The left wing of the party was not united. Amadeo Bordiga's group enjoyed the most influence; it vigorously demanded expulsion of the reformists, advocated the idea of Soviets of Workers, Peasants and Soldiers and published the paper *Il Soviet* in Naples. At the same time his supporters called themselves the "Abstentionist Communist Faction", called for a boycott of parliament, and the creation of a small, but "pure" party. The group of Egidio Gennari, Marabini and Misiano tried to achieve unity of the Left in the fight against reformism. The group of Left Socialists led by Antonio Gramsci and

¹ P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito comunista italiano*, Vol. 1, Turin, 1967, pp. 27-30.

² V.I. Lenin, "To Comrade Serrati and to All Italian Communists", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, 1977, p. 91.

including Palmiro Togliatti, Umberto Terracini and Angelo Tasca grew in influence. From May 1, 1919 it began to publish the weekly *L'Ordine Nuovo* in Turin, in which it raised acute theoretical and practical issues of the proletarian struggle, published articles by Lenin and statements of the Comintern. The group saw the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat adopted by the party not just as a revolutionary slogan and general formula but as a guide to action that should be employed in the light of the Russian experience.¹ It attached great significance to the role of the party in organising the masses.

The group closely studied the situation in the worker milieu in Turin and, as a result, came to the conclusion that internal workshop commissions, which had arisen first in 1906 and operated during the war in the biggest factories, could and should become the embryo of Workers' Councils. Transformed into factory committees or councils, these commissions could be turned into bodies identical with the revolutionary works committees in Russia, the production councils in Germany and Austria and the shop stewards' committees in Great Britain. In June 1919, in the article "Labour Democracy" written jointly with Palmiro Togliatti, Gramsci proposed developing the struggle in Italy under the slogan "All Power in the Factory to the Factory Committees" and "All State Power to the Workers' and Peasants' Councils". In bringing the struggle for factory committees to the fore Gramsci implied that the workers themselves would "create a genuine workers' democracy" in the course of this struggle. "Such a system of workers' democracy (integrated with corresponding peasant organisations) would give the masses a permanent structure and discipline. It would be a magnificent school of political and administrative experience and an instrument of involvement down to the last man, fostering the tenacity and perseverance of the masses and their self-awareness as an army in the field."² He saw the creation of factory councils as "the first stage on the historic route that leads to the proletarian dictatorship and communism".³ Factory councils should exercise three functions: workers' control over production, self-administration of the working people, and conquest of power. They should serve as a means in creating a state apparatus that would, on the one hand, "function democratically, that is, ensure that all anti-capitalist trends have freedom of action and an opportunity to join the proletarian government on a party basis", and, on the other, "would act like a ruthless machine crushing the organs of industrial and political power of capitalism".⁴

¹ Antonio Gramsci, *L'Ordine Nuovo*, Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1970, p. 13.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

³ *L'Ordine Nuovo*, August 23, 1919.

⁴ Antonio Gramsci, *L'Ordine Nuovo*, pp. 59-60.

This ability to grasp the main point, to see tomorrow in today was not a frequent occurrence among European revolutionaries at that time. Gramsci himself later recognised that some of his formulations were not precise enough. But the main thing was his understanding that "the development of the factory councils should lead to the leadership of the working class in the country and supremacy of the proletarian and revolutionary elements in the Socialist Party".¹ Unfortunately the influence of the *L'Ordine Nuovo* group was limited at the time to Turin.

In France the victorious ending of the World War strengthened the bourgeoisie, and it exploited the military success to spread illusions that all urgent problems would be rapidly resolved, destruction made good, and the people's material conditions improved at the expense of defeated Germany. Not only the petty bourgeoisie but some of the working class could not resist the new wave of chauvinism. But the illusions did not last long.

Industry and agriculture were slow in getting put right. The increase in external and internal debt, the fall in the exchange rate of the franc and inflation aggravated the situation. While the prices of food and prime necessities at the beginning of 1919 were three or four times higher than prewar, workers' wages had remained frozen at the 1913 level. Taxes increased considerably, and unemployment was skyrocketing, especially among women.

In the spring of 1919 there was a marked increase of mass struggle. The workers demanded above all higher wages and an 8-hour working day, 10,000 Lorraine miners went on strike protesting against a cut in wage rates. On March 29, 150,000 Parisians came out on a demonstration against the acquittal of Jean Jaures' murderer. In April the clothing workers of Paris stopped work, and the bank clerks threatened to strike. The ruling circles were forced to make concessions. In March Parliament passed a bill on collective bargaining, in April on the 8-hour day, and in July on vocational education.²

May Day was marked in all major centres by a 24-hour strike. In Paris, in spite of the authorities' ban, 500,000 demonstrators filled the streets. Hundreds of demonstrators and policemen were injured in the clashes. Troops sent in fraternised with workers. On May 25 there was the traditional march to the Père Lachaise cemetery in memory of the Paris Commune. A wave of strikes swept the country. In July the strike movement assumed an unprecedented scale, with the number of participants exceeding 500,000. It involved builders, textile workers, shoemakers and department store employees. The farm labourers of the Seine-et-Marne Department joined

¹ Palmiro Togliatti, *Gramsci*, Milan, 1949, pp. 45, 47.

² Jean Bruhat and Marc Piolat, *Esquisse d'une histoire de la C.G.T. (1895-1965)*, C.G.T., Paris, 1966, pp. 87-89.

in the struggle. The landowners were forced to raise wages and make other concessions. The official statistics recorded 2,026 strikes in 1919, the maximum for the time, involving 1,151,000 workers. The number of days lost exceeded 15 million. In the forefront were engineering and metal workers, then came builders, transport workers and miners. Roughly half of the strikes ended in compromises, less than a quarter in victory for the strikers, the rest were failures. The workers won an average cost-of-living increment of 20 to 25 per cent.¹

A struggle of the French proletariat against intervention in Soviet Russia developed. However, the leaders of the French Socialist Party, while publishing revolutionary-sounding declarations, and having even adopted a resolution, at the congress in April, recognising the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat, in fact did nothing to organise mass actions, concerning themselves only with preparation for the parliamentary elections. The leaders of the CGT directly opposed spontaneous actions by the working class.

But while the right-wing and centrist leaders held back the development of the working class struggle, generating disappointment among some and protests among others, the bourgeois parties entered the parliamentary elections in November in close order. The National Bloc succeeded in pressing hard the Socialists who lost 31 seats getting only 55. This defeat intensified disagreements within the party. The right wing claimed that the masses were not ready to accept a revolutionary programme, but that was refuted by the growth of revolutionary sentiment among the workers at large and in the party itself. In the search for a formula acceptable to both revolutionaries and reformists, the centrists put forward the idea of a "reconstruction" of the Second International and its adaptation to the new conditions. This policy of the leadership provoked mounting dissatisfaction within the party. The Left Socialists intensified agitation for a break with the Second International. The influence of the Committee for Restoring International Relations, renamed the Committee of the Third International in May 1919, was growing. Revolutionary trends were strengthening within the CGT. The revolutionary syndicalists led by Gaston Monmousseau, Alfred Rosmer and Pierre Sémard rallied around *La Vie Ouvrière*. At the Lyons Congress of the CGT, Monmousseau directly charged Léon Jouhaux and his supporters with trying by every possible means to "weaken the proletariat of France so that it could not rise against the imperialists who are strangling our Russian and Hungarian revolutionary friends".²

¹ *Annuaire Statistique. Cinquante-huitième volume 1951*, Paris, 1952, p. 102.

² Cited from G.F. Baskakov, "The French Railwaymen's General Strike in May 1920", *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, 1957, No. 5, p. 28.

In *Great Britain* the capitalist class exploited the fact that the country had come out of the war victorious. Lloyd George's coalition government carried out a number of reforms: the property qualification for the franchise was abolished, the voting age was lowered, the franchise was granted to a considerable part of women, and the education system was improved.

The parliamentary election of December 1918 took place in a situation of patriotic fervour and brought victory to the joint forces of the Conservatives and Liberals who received more than 5 million votes. The Conservatives got 338 seats, and the Liberals 146. The Labour Party, which had been forced by the pressure of the rank and file to quit the coalition immediately after the end of hostilities, made a considerable advance, getting 2,500,000 votes, six times as many as in the last prewar election. But because of the undemocratic electoral system it got only 57 seats in the House of Commons.¹

Harsh reality soon dispersed the workers' hopes; class conflicts intensified. A strike movement developed that had a marked offensive character. In January 1919 more than 100,000 engineering workers of the Clyde industrial area in Scotland led by shop stewards and works committees downed tools without the sanction of their union leaders. On January 31, during a workers' demonstration in George Square in Glasgow, a battle broke out between the strikers and the police, and the workers threw up barricades. The leaders of the strike were arrested, and the authorities brought troops, tanks and artillery into the city. One of the shop stewards' leaders, William Gallacher, later recalled: "A rising was expected. A rising should have taken place. The workers were ready and able to effect it; *the leadership had never thought of it.*"² Although the strike did spread beyond the Clyde, the government, supported by the Labour Party and union leaders, broke it.

The million-strong army of miners was ready for a fight. They were demanding not only a rise in pay and reduction of the working day, but also nationalisation of the mines and the institution of workers' control. Lloyd George's Government manoeuvred: it appointed the Sankey Commission and managed to have the already scheduled strike postponed, then breaking it with the aid of the leaders of the Triple Alliance, which united the miners', railwaymen's and transport workers' unions. In the summer the Lancashire textile workers went on strike; there were also railway and police strikes. Altogether 2,591,000 workers took part in 1,352 strikes in 1919, which involved the loss of nearly 35 million man-days, six

¹ Ralph Miliband, *Parliamentary Socialism*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1961, p. 64.

² William Gallacher, *Revolt on the Clyde. An Autobiography*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1934, p. 234.

times as many as in the preceding year. The overwhelming majority of the strikes ended in either full or partial victory for the workers.¹ More than 6,200,000 workers won pay rises and around 6,300,000 a shorter working day.²

The upswing of the labour movement demonstrated the urgent need to unite the various revolutionary organisations functioning in Britain. In the summer of 1919 they began negotiations on forming a united Communist Party. The most important of participants was the British Socialist Party (BSP). Its leaders John MacLean, Albert Inkpin, Theodore Rothstein, Tom Bell, William Gallacher and Harry Pollitt held a position of revolutionary Marxism and considered the main job to be "to stir the workers of Great Britain into action not only for the protection of the New Soviet Republic against the attacks of the capitalist International, but also for the speediest overthrow of Capitalism in their own country".³ The Socialist Labour Party (SLP) consisted of supporters of revolutionary syndicalism. Its leaders Arthur MacManus and J. T. Murphy, were also at the head, along with Gallacher, of the shop stewards' movement, which included the most militant, class-conscious workers who bitterly hated capitalism and were hostile to reformism. The Workers' Socialist Federation (WSF) had grown from the suffragette organisation founded by Sylvia Pankhurst. The South Wales Socialist Society (SWSS) called for a mass revolutionary struggle under the leadership of the revolutionary trade unions.

While those involved in the negotiations shared common views on the principles and aims of the revolutionary organisation, they differed on strategy and tactics, above all on the issue of separation from the Labour Party and parliamentarianism. While the BSP considered affiliation to the Labour Party indispensable and favoured revolutionary parliamentarianism, the SLP, while agreeing to working in Parliament, was against affiliation to the Labour Party, as were the WSF and the SWSS. The latter two organisations, for their part, were resolutely anti-parliamentary. It took more than a year to overcome these differences.⁴

At that time the old antagonism between British imperialism and the people of *Ireland*, Great Britain's European colony, became more acute. An important factor aggravating it was the marked growth of national capital in Ireland and the consolidation of the national bourgeoisie. The decisive political force in the Irish nationalist camp had long been the moderate Irish Parliamentary Party

¹ *18th Abstract of Labour Statistics*, London, 1927, pp. 144-45.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 121, 129.

³ *The Call*, April 24, 1919.

⁴ James Klugmann, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain*, Vol. 1, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1968, pp. 20-50.

(Dáil), which called only for limited Home Rule. The influential Catholic Church took the same stand. The million-strong Protestant population (Anglo-Irish and Scotto-Irish) in the counties of Ulster in the northeast stood for maintenance of the colonial union of Ireland with Great Britain.

The Irish labour movement was weak. The workers of small factories and the farm labourers were easily influenced by nationalist bourgeois propaganda and were also under the influence of revolutionary syndicalists who recognised only struggle in the economic sphere and direct action (strikes), leaving the bourgeoisie freedom of action in the political arena. Industrial proletariat proper existed only in highly developed Ulster, but the influence of the local bourgeoisie and the Protestant Church cut the workers off from their class brothers in the south, which weakened the liberation movement.

Socialist ideas had few followers in the Irish labour movement. Yet the workers' actions had a militant, uncompromising character and inspired the nationalist part of the bourgeoisie to a more resolute struggle against British imperialism. The crushing of the Easter Rebellion of 1916 in Dublin strengthened the Irish will to resist and helped broaden the national liberation struggle. The October Revolution in Russia had a great impact on members of the Irish movement, on their struggle for peace and national self-determination. Progressive Irish workers saw in the Soviet State the embodiment of their own ideal—the "Workers' Republic". A general strike in April 1918 forced the British Government to refrain from conscripting Irishmen for the army.

In the British parliamentary election of December 1918 three-quarters of the Irish votes went to Sinn Fein (We Ourselves), the national-bourgeois party calling for an independent Irish Republic. On January 21, 1919, 29 Sinn Fein MPs (the other 44 were in British gaols) met in Dublin instead of going to London, and declared themselves the Irish Parliament (Dáil). The Dáil proclaimed the secession of Ireland from the United Kingdom and the establishment of the Irish Republic, adopted a declaration of independence and demanded the withdrawal of British troops. In a message to the nations of the world, it called for recognition of the Republic and aid for it. Eamon De Valera, leader of the Sinn Fein left wing, then in prison, was elected President. But the programme of social reforms put forward by the Dáil and Government was rather moderate. The Sinn Feiners did not call on the people to rise in defence of the Republic.

The initiators of the revolutionary liberation war for Ireland's full independence was the working class. In January and February 1919 Belfast workers went on strike putting forward economic de-

mands; in April there was a general political strike in Limerick against the state of emergency introduced by the British troops. In the summer of 1919, paramilitary units of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) developed an active guerrilla struggle against the police and the British troops stationed in Ireland. Thus a national liberation anti-imperialist revolution began in Ireland.

In the *United States of America* the working class markedly intensified its struggle for improved living and working conditions after the close of the war. The aggravation of social contrasts, the increase in exploitation, unemployment and the cost of living, combined with the impact of the revolutionary events in Russia and Western Europe, became the source of new class conflicts. The strike movement spread rapidly in spite of the opposition of the union bureaucracy. In 1919 there were 3,630 strikes involving 4,160,000 persons, i.e., 20.8 per cent of those employed (in 1917 and 1918 around 6 per cent)¹. The strikers often put forward demands and slogans that went beyond the traditional framework: e.g. workers' participation in deciding matters of work regime and organisation, hiring and firing, the appointment of foremen and rationalisation. As a rule these demands for workers' control of production were made by shop committees that were set up spontaneously in many areas.

At the beginning of 1919 a wave of general strikes swept the country. In January the shipbuilders of Seattle, Wash., stopped work demanding a pay rise, an eight-hour day, and a 44-hour week. They were supported by workers of other trades. The strike involved 60,000 workers, and on February 6 became city-wide. It was directed by a general strike committee sometimes called a "Soviet". The city was actually in its hands: the committee had to cope with problems of water supply, lighting, providing for hospitals, the organisation of soup kitchens, maintenance of public order and so on.²

The militant spirit of the Seattle workers was stimulated by their awareness of the need for a united struggle against capital. The paper *Union Record*, organ of the Seattle Central Labor Council, which wrote much about the revolutionary gains of the Russian proletariat, played a major role in organising the struggle. On the eve of the strike 20,000 copies of the leaflet "Russia Did It", which urged the shipyard workers to "take over management of the shipyards" and "control of your jobs", were printed.³ The Seattle

¹ *Analysis of Work Stoppages During 1950*, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1951, p. 2; *Historical Statistics of the United States, 1789-1945*, Washington, D.C., 1949, p. 73.

² Harvey O'Connor, *Revolution in Seattle. A Memory*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1964; R.L. Friedheim, *The Seattle General Strike*, Univ. of Washington Press, Seattle, 1964.

³ *American Federation of Labor Papers, President's Office, General Correspondence, 1919*, Wisconsin State Historical Society Library, Box 35, Folder 6.

struggle acquired political significance because of its mass scale, organisation and the striving of the strikers to go beyond the framework of economic demands. The Administration, Congress and AFL leaders, apprehensive about these developments, put strong pressure on the strike leaders. It was called off on February 11, although 35,000 shipbuilders continued the strike for nearly a month. Many workers and union activists were arrested.

The steelworkers waged a stubborn struggle against the Steel Trust (the U.S. Steel Corporation), one of the most powerful US monopolies which had prevented organisation of unions for many years. Among the union organisers was the young worker William Z. Foster, an AFL organiser in the meatpacking and steel industries from 1917 to 1920. The steel strike, which was led by a national committee in Chicago consisting of representatives of a whole number of unions (including the steelworkers, miners, firemen and machinists) began in late September 1919 and engulfed 70 industrial centres. It involved 365,000 workers, almost 90 per cent of those employed in the industry. The main demands were a pay rise and union recognition. The press began to scream about impending revolution, claiming that the strike was "the work of foreigners". The Administration tried to end the strike by force. In Pennsylvania there were clashes between the workers and the police and thugs employed by the companies. A conference convened by the national committee in January 1920 was forced to call off the strike because Samuel Gompers, the leader of the AFL, and the craft union leaders refused to help the strikers. On top of that, the miners' and railwaymen's unions did not display sufficient solidarity with the striking steelworkers. Yet, although the strike ended in failure, it was a vital event in the US labour movement.¹

During the miners' strike in the summer and autumn of 1919 workers demanded nationalisation of the coal industry. A resolution on putting the company property "under democratic control" was supported unanimously by the convention of the United Mine-workers of America. More than 400,000 miners took part in a general strike in November 1919, demanding a 60 per cent pay rise, a 30-hour working week and additional pay for overtime. Although a Federal Court ruled their strike illegal and Gompers and other union leaders tried to get it called off, it only ended on January 7, 1920 in a compromise pay rise of 14 per cent. Some of the miners stayed on strike until March 31 and won a pay rise of 27 per cent.

The railroad brotherhoods (1,500,000 members) demanded nationalisation of the railways, a demand that was later introduced in

¹ Anthony Bimba, *The History of the American Working Class*, International Publishers, New York, 1927, pp. 268-76.

Congress (the Plumb Plan). The plan was supported by other AFL unions (in spite of Gompers' protests). 90 per cent of the railway workers voting in the brotherhood's poll favoured a strike to make Congress enact the nationalisation scheme. The Plumb Plan was turned down by Congress, yet the demands for nationalisation still continued.

The proletariat's dissatisfaction with the policies of the bourgeois parties, and the stronger political ring in the economic struggle gave rise to a movement for independent political action in the unions and for an independent labour party. The idea of such a party had been put forward at the end of 1918 by the Chicago Federation of Labour (an affiliate AFL). It issued a programme of 14 points, anti-monopoly in character and envisaging major social and economic reforms, to wit, nationalisation of the railways, telegraph companies, public utilities, grain elevators and natural resources; the institution of "democratic control" in all other industries and in commerce; the establishment of an 8-hour day and minimum rate of pay; recognition of the right to a union and to collective bargaining; the creation of a government social insurance system; public works to eliminate unemployment; restoration of freedom of speech, assembly, and press; and the release of political prisoners.

The leaders of the Chicago Federation counterposed this democratic platform of the progressive labour movement to the demagogic "peace programme" set out in President Wilson's 14 Points, and suggested the founding of a League of Workers of All Nations in order to liquidate autocracy and militarism and carry out universal disarmament. Although some points of the programme reflected the workers' naive faith in the possibility of dealing with acute social problems by parliamentary acts, it became the platform on which the national Labor Party (centred in Chicago) was founded in the autumn of 1919, converted the following year into the Farmer-Labor Party.

In a situation of general upsurge of the labour movement in the spring of 1919, the left wing of the Socialist Party of America steered for an independent organisation. John Reed, Charles Ruthenberg, Alfred Wagenknecht and other Left Socialists issued a manifesto and soon began to publish the paper *Communist* in New York. The manifesto and programme, which put forward the idea of workers' councils and workers' control over production, were distributed in Philadelphia, Cleveland and other centres. The left-wingers held an independent referendum of party members in several big cities, which gave them a majority. The Executive Committee of the SPA responded by expelling 7 of the 12 national sections (Russian, Ukrainian, Hungarian, etc.) from the party, and also a number of circuit organisations—more than half of the party's membership.

That faced the left wing, who had convened a convention in New York in June 1919, with a dilemma of whether to found their own party or to try and take over leadership of the SPA.

On August 30, 1919 the Left did not succeed in carrying a majority of the party with them at the SPA convention in Chicago. The right wing and centrists expelled their delegates with the help of the police. At that moment a tactical fight broke out among the leftists themselves. As a result two parties were founded at the beginning of September: the Communist Party of America (CPA) led by Ruthenberg and consisting primarily of the national minority federations, and the Communist Labor Party of America (CLPA) led by John Reed and Wagenknecht, in which born Americans predominated. There were no differences of principle between them, but divergences on matters of tactics prevented them from achieving unity for a long time, while left-sectarian attitudes complicated their ties with the masses.

The authorities subjected both parties to brutal repression, which forced them to go underground. A hysterical campaign by reactionary circles against "Reds" and radicals reduced the opportunities of political education by the progressive forces of the labour movement and weakened union organisation. The Administration hastened to push anti-labour and anti-democratic legislation through Congress, which all had the result, in Wm. Z. Foster's words, that "at the end of World War I, the big monopolists held the United States within their grasp more firmly than ever both industrially and politically".¹

In countries not involved in World War I the upheavals caused by war also led to a significant rise in the activity of the working class. It defended its interests more resolutely than before, and in some countries rose to independent political action under the impact of the Russian Socialist Revolution of 1917 and the revolutions in the centre of Europe.

Events developed rapidly in neutral *Netherlands*, where unrest began among the soldiers in October 1918. News of the beginning of the revolution in neighbouring Germany roused the working class. In Amsterdam, Rotterdam and other cities labour unions and "unions of conscripted soldiers" (Soldiers' Councils) demanded social and economic reforms.

The right-wing clerical government, panic-stricken, ordered public buildings to be sandbagged, streets patrolled by troops, sailors disarmed, and navy ships incapacitated. It agreed to consider the workers' demands. The influential paper *De Telegraaf* even declared

¹ William Z. Foster, *Outline Political History of the Americas*, International Publishers, New York, 1951, p. 364.

its readiness to support the revolution "on certain terms". In the meantime, reactionary circles mobilised all their forces: the "volunteer Landsturm" was called up, and the national guard was formed. An assurance was received from Great Britain that negotiations on food supplies would only be carried on with representatives of the Royal Netherlands Government.¹

Evidence of the radicalisation of the masses was the behaviour of the leader of the reformist Social-Democratic Labour Party of the Netherlands (SDAP), Pieter Troelstra, who had called for "civil peace" throughout the war. At a meeting in Rotterdam on November 11 he declared that a proletarian revolution was necessary and that the working class should take power into its own hands in the near future.² The next day he repeated his threat from the rostrum of parliament, which enabled the SDAP and its related Netherlands Federation of Trade (NFT) to take the lead of the spontaneously developing movement.

On November 13 a mass meeting of workers, soldiers and sailors was held in Amsterdam at which Domela Nieuwenhuis, a veteran of the labour movement, and the Left leaders David Wijnkoop and Henriette Roland-Holst spoke. When the meeting moved off through the town, police and government troops opened fire on the unarmed demonstrators. Five persons were killed and around 20 wounded. The soldiers did not support the workers. The Left Social-Democratic Party (the Tribunists), which since 1909 had come out as a party of Marxist revolutionaries, called for a general strike. But its influence was not sufficient in 1918 to give the strike a mass character (it had 1,089 members and its paper *De Tribune* had a circulation of 4,500 copies). At the congresses of the SDAP and NFT held on November 16 and 17 the reformist leaders seeking to divert the masses from independent actions put forward a programme of partial demands which included immediate demobilisation and improvement of working conditions.³

The "Red Week" in the Netherlands did not grow into a revolution. Troelstra and his associates were able at the critical moment to save the power of the bourgeoisie. Later he boasted that if he had not spoken in a revolutionary manner, the most energetic elements among the Social-Democratic workers "would have taken the road of Bolshevism".⁴ Lenin remarked that the leaders had been able to placate the workers "with reforms and still more with promises

¹ H.J. Scheffer, *November 1918. Journal van een revolutie die niet doorging*, Amsterdam, 1968, pp. 133-34, 173-286.

² *Ibid.*, p. 99.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 200-18.

⁴ P.J. Troelstra, *De Revolutie en de S.D.A.P.*, Amsterdam, 1919, p. 111.

of reforms. 'Strongly worded appeals' and revolutionary phrases were used to placate—and deceive—the workers."¹

The bourgeoisie was forced, nevertheless, to introduce a 45-hour week in the spring of 1919, ban child labour, improve the terms of social insurance, and grant women the suffrage. But the strike movement continued. That year there were 649 strikes (twice as many as in the preceding year), though the number of strikers was only 61,000.² In this period the NFT and SDAP adapted themselves to the radical mood of the masses. The party even proclaimed the possibility of "attaining power by means not envisaged by laws" and the institution of a "social-democratic state".³ As the movement subsided all these phrases were thrown overboard.

Only the Tribunist Social-Democrats, who renamed their party communist in November 1918, continued the revolutionary struggle. Many of its leaders, however, who had made no little contribution to the Dutch and German labour movements, had long been disposed to leftist extremes, and their left sectarian attitude soon undermined the party's influence among the masses.

In November 1918 economic and political situation in *Switzerland* sharply deteriorated. The bourgeois government was seriously concerned about the labour organisations' plans to celebrate the first anniversary of the Russian October Revolution, which coincided with the beginning of the revolution in Germany. On the eve of the anniversary, reliable army units, that were not, in the authorities' view, "infected with Bolshevism and soldiers' unions", were moved into Zurich. On November 8, by agreement with the Entente Powers, it was announced that the Soviet diplomatic mission was going to be expelled from the country. That only made the workers more indignant.

On November 9, a 24-hour general strike against the provocative mobilisation of troops was staged in 19 Swiss towns. In Zurich, where unarmed workers clashed with the troops, the Labour Union called a meeting for the next day to express "solidarity with the triumphant socialist revolution", declaring that the strike would continue until all the workers' political and economic demands were met in full, including cancellation of the expulsion of the Soviet mission. Between 15 and 20 thousand people gathered in a city square. Infantry surrounded them and opened fire, while cavalry charged the demonstrators with sabres drawn. Many were injured. On the night of November 11 a national strike began in which between 300 and 400 thousand workers took part.⁴

¹ V.I. Lenin, "How the Bourgeoisie Utilises Renegades", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 37.

² *Jaarcijfers voor het Koninkrijk der Nederland, 1920*, S'Graventage, 1921, pp. 88-89.

³ P.J. Troelstra, *op. cit.*, pp. 111.

⁴ C. Frey, *La grève générale de 1918*, Geneva, 1968.

The Olten Action Committee, set up back in early 1918 by the Social-Democratic Party of Switzerland (SPS) and the Association of Swiss Unions, issued a programme of demands that included democratisation of the electoral system, institution of a 48-hour working week, social insurance and provision of food for the populace.¹ The strike paralysed the country's whole economic life. Only labour papers appeared. *Volksrecht* called "Hold Out!", declaring that the revolutions in Germany and Austria, the labour actions in France and Holland, and, the main thing, the victory of the Russian Revolution—all augured success.² On the initiative of a communist group formed by Fritz Platten and Jacob Herzog Zurich metal workers set up a Workers' Council.

The authorities responded by mobilising troops and conscripting railwaymen, by threats to civil servants, military censorship, and sending in the Civil Guard. In Basle, Geneva, Zurich and Granges there were clashes between workers and the police and soldiers. In the meantime the Olten Action Committee agreed to negotiate with the government, which had brought troops into the premises of labour organisations and publishers in Berne and Zurich. Behind the backs of the masses, who were full of determination to continue the struggle, the Committee issued instructions in the night of November 14 to call off the strike on the grounds that it did not want to "deliver the masses defenceless to the machine-guns of our adversaries".³ This capitulation was seen by the workers as a gross betrayal. In Zurich and many other towns the workers stayed on strike for several more days. Following the breaking of the strike (which has gone down in Swiss history as the General Strike), the workers were disenchanted in both their leaders and their organisations. The country has never since known actions on such a scale.

In February 1919 a Congress of the SPS was held. It discussed the attitude to be taken by the party towards the plan to convene a conference of the Second International in Berne. The centrists led by Robert Grimm voted for the resolution of the Left moved by Fritz Platten, an indication that the Swiss workers' militant spirit had not been broken. The resolution rejected the party's participation in reviving the reformist International and greeted the revolutions in Russia and Germany. Only in September 1919 did the opportunist SPS leadership manage to return the majority of the party to its side.

As soon as German troops began to leave *Luxemburg* in November 1918 Workers' Councils arose spontaneously. They took over the

¹ Heinz Egger, *Die Entstehung der Kommunistischen Partei und des Kommunistischen Jugendverbandes der Schweiz*, Zurich, 1952, pp. 130-33.

² *Volksrecht*, November 12, 1918.

³ *La Sentinelle*, November 15, 1918.

management of enterprises and on their own initiative introduced an 8-hour day in mines, the steel industry, and the railway workshops. They also set about driving out the occupation authorities' detested appointees at enterprises. The government was forced to recognise the already formed production committees and the 8-hour working day.¹

At the same time a republican movement developed, led by the left wing of the Socialist Party. The Grand Duchess Marie Adelaïde had turned the public against herself by both her sympathy for Kaiser Germany and her attempts in breach of the Constitution to put the clerical party in office. The movement reached its climax when the armed forces of Luxemburg (the Volunteer Company) joined them at the turn of the year and seized the barracks. The government was isolated. The left deputies set up a Committee of Public Safety which occupied the parliament building and proclaimed a republic. But the French troops that had arrived in the Duchy in November 1918 suppressed the republicans' action. The new occupation authorities were interested in removing the Germanophile Grand Duchess but not in victory of the revolution. After Marie Adelaïde had abdicated in favour of her sister, French soldiers drove the members of the Committee of Public Safety out of parliament. The revolutionary democratic struggle was, however, not without results. The Constitution adopted in 1919 introduced universal suffrage, a proportional electoral system and the referendum—important democratic gains for the people of Luxemburg.²

In neutral *Spain* the end of the war led to a general fall in production and foreign trade. Unemployment and inflation grew. The working class looked for a way out of its hard conditions by intensifying its struggle against exploitation. Workers of various political views welcomed the victory of the October Revolution in Russia, and the Spanish Socialist Labour Party (PSTE) and the anarchosyndicalist national Confederation of Labour (CNT) took action against the imperialist blockade of Soviet Russia, foiling the Entente's attempt to draw Spain into intervention. In early 1919, Barcelona, the major industrial centre of Spain, became the focus of a strike struggle. On March 24, at the call of the CNT, a general strike began in the city. The upsurge of the strike movement (according to the official figures, 895 strikes in 1919 against 463 in 1918, with the number of participants reaching 178 thousand), forced the government to pass a law on the 8-hour day, and to introduce old-age insurance for workers and unemployment benefits.³

¹ Jean Kill, *1.000 jähriges Luxemburg. Woher?-Wohin?*, Druck und Verlag C.O.P.E., Luxemburg, 1963, p. 173.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 179-182.

³ *Anuario estadístico de España. Año 1931*, Madrid, 1933, p. 83.

In *Portugal* the reactionary Sidónio Pais regime had discredited itself in the eyes of the broad masses of the working people. There was a particularly acute clash between the government and labour organisations during the general strike called by the National Labour Union (the association of Portuguese trade unions). Many union functionaries, mainly railwaymen and farm labourers, were thrown into prison or exiled to African colonies. In spite of its failure, the strike facilitated the downfall of the Pais dictatorship. The workers also played a decisive role in defeating the monarchist putsch of the winter of 1919. Mass demonstrations in Lisbon and the direct involvement of worker battalions in the fighting with the monarchists prevented restoration of the monarchy and saved bourgeois democracy for the time being.¹ For the first time a member of the Socialist Party joined the coalition government, which enjoyed the support of all parties standing for a republic. But the Socialists' influence among Portuguese workers remained insignificant. The anarchosyndicalist National Labour Union, which became the General Confederation of Labour in 1919, was in a stronger position.

A tense situation built up in *Scandinavia* after the close of the war. In Sweden, the Right Social-Democrats managed to ward off a general strike. In Denmark, a Ministry of Social Policy was urgently set up, its head Thorwald Stauning, leader of the Social-Democrats and member of the coalition cabinet since 1916.

In 1919, the strike struggle intensified considerably in all three countries. As a result of their mass actions, the workers of Scandinavia achieved certain economic and political gains. The 8-hour working day was introduced. Compulsory industrial accident insurance at the expense of the employers was introduced in Sweden. In Norway, the workers won two-week holidays. In Denmark, the legislation transferred land free to landless peasants to farm as public rent-paying tenants.

Considerable changes were made in the electoral system. In Sweden, universal suffrage was introduced by a new statute. The reform democratised elections to both houses of the Riksdag, but retained the property qualification for members of the upper house, and even raised the age qualification in municipal elections. In Norway, the majority system was replaced in 1919 by a limited proportional system, the age qualification became somewhat lower and the number of members of the Storting was increased. In Denmark, a judicial reform separated the judiciary from the executive, introduced trial by jury for heinous crimes, and the basically public character of the court procedures.

¹ Alexandre Vieira, *Para a História do Sindicalismo em Portugal*, Seara Nova, Lisbon, 1974, pp. 135-40.

The organisational formation of a revolutionary wing in the socialist movement of Scandinavia continued. In June 1919 the Norwegian Labour Party led by Martin Tranmael declared its adoption of a revolutionary stand.

The radical activists of the Swedish trade union movement decided to unite the left opposition. In September they founded a League of Trade Union Propaganda that developed work within the reformist unions and among the unemployed with the aim of rallying all organised workers of Sweden on a revolutionary socialist basis in a nation-wide strong and militant organisation.¹ In November the Socialist Labour Party of Denmark (Gerson Georg Trier, Marie Nielsen and Martin Andersen Nexö), merging with the majority of the Social-Democratic Youth League, formed the Left Socialist Party of Denmark.

* * *

The postwar revolutionary upsurge in developed capitalist countries did not bring the proletariat convincing victories in 1918-1919. Although a revolutionary situation took shape in some countries and the working-class struggle had a very tense character, the ruling classes, while sometimes seriously alarmed, were able to maintain their power. The workers managed to gain only partial advances; viz., a degree of democratisation of the political system, extension of the franchise, the 8-hour day, and the introduction or improvement of social legislation. The influence of reformist leaders, who were trying to hold back and limit the revolutionary actions of the working class, was weakened in the labour movement. In many countries militant revolutionary groups and organisations emerged and tried to further the development of class battles in every way; and the first Communist parties arose.

In spite of the defeat of its vanguard contingents, the revolutionary potential of the West European and American proletariat in 1919 was far from exhausted. The working class strove to continue the struggle and gathered its forces for another attack on the strongholds of capitalism. It was firmly resolved to defend its gains, and above all to help the survival of Soviet Russia, the first country where the workers, with the support of the peasant masses, had not only seized power but were valiantly defending it against the attacks of a host of enemies.

¹ E. Andersson, *Vad vill fackliga propaganda förbundet?*, Stockholm, 1921, p. 2.

Chapter 5

THE TWO LINES IN THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

THE DEMARCATION OF REVOLUTIONARIES FROM REFORMISTS

The October Revolution of 1917 was the most vivid expression of the aggravation of the general crisis of capitalism that began during the first imperialist world war. The "world-wide crises of unparalleled intensity—economic, political, national and international",¹ forecast by Lenin, occurred, which he later described as a "tremendous sharpening of *all* capitalist contradictions" and a world revolutionary crisis.²

The fact that the working class in many countries had no really revolutionary leadership in this situation of revolutionary actions by the international proletariat and oppressed nations and incipient breaking up of the old world, had a particularly disastrous effect. In these revolutionary conditions most of the parties of the collapsed Second International, which had taken a social-chauvinist stand during the war, took a line of acting against both the proletarian government in Russia and development of a revolutionary proletarian struggle in their own countries. The centrist trend, which had created separate parties, or had become the leadership in several old Social-Democratic parties, pursued a policy of collaboration with the bourgeoisie and right-wing socialist leaders on a platform of social-reformism.

The reformist trends that had come to the top in most of the parties of the Second International even before the war had weakened the labour movement and caused splits in it. During the war the social-chauvinism and "class peace" policy not only divided the Social-Democrats of the belligerent groups into two hostile camps on the international plane, but also deepened the internal struggle in each national party. The centrists' attempts to smooth over the disagreements held back growth of the revolutionary trend in the working-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Letters from Afar", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 299.

² V.I. Lenin, "To the Executive Committee of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, 1976, p. 450.

class movement, but could not stifle it, because it rested on the objective underlying needs of historical development.

The victory of the October Revolution and the birth in Russia of a new social system opposed to capitalism were evidence of the powerful vital force of the revolutionary trend in the labour movement and of the growth of its opportunities. Its maturing was also manifested in the revolutionary explosion that occurred in Central Europe. The reformists strained in vain to prevent it and when it occurred did everything they could to weaken it. And in those countries where the upsurge of proletarian struggle did not erupt into revolution, the masses of the workers (as was shown above) rose in revolutionary actions aimed against the existing system, and forced the ruling circles to make concessions of one sort or another.

The imperialist bourgeoisie did its utmost to suppress the revolutionary trend in the working-class movement. In Germany the forces of reaction struck a heavy blow against the revolutionary vanguard a mere two months after the outbreak of the revolution, and did so largely by the hands of right-wing Social-Democratic leaders, among whom the most sinister figure (though by no means the only one) was Noske, the executioner of the German workers. People of that type, though calling themselves reformists, were not in fact such. Having joined the ranks of counter-revolution, they voluntarily took on the role of organisers of the bitterest struggle against the revolution and the revolutionary movement. When they carried out political and social reforms of any sort they did so because they were forced to it by the masses' struggle, and not because they wanted reforms. In yielding to the masses' demands, however, they strove to deceive the workers, and split their ranks, not only to prevent overthrow of the capitalist system but also to avoid any substantial curtailment of the power of the imperialists and militarists.

Centrist leaders like Karl Kautsky and Otto Bauer, who had once been, or been thought, revolutionaries, became, to some extent, social-reformists in the traditional sense. They had long known how to camouflage their reformism by a collection of quotations from the works of Marx and Engels, and by assurances of "orthodoxy" couched in radical and revolutionary phraseology. Reformism in the context of comparatively "peaceful" development of capitalism, however, was one thing, but when a new historical epoch had begun, the era of socialist revolution, it became quite something else. The centrists continued to defend it even at the historical moment "when bourgeois reformism throughout the world has collapsed and the war has created a revolutionary situation".¹ They tried, more-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "First Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 458.

over, to prevent a too impetuous course of history, still dreaming of a "peaceful" and "organised" revolution, when a real revolution matured in the conditions created by four years of imperialist world war, which had inevitably put its stamp on it. Terrified by the revolution, the reformists recoiled, deserted to the enemies' camp, and went so far as to deny or ignore the truth that "in revolutionary epochs the class struggle has always, inevitably, and in every country, assumed the form of *civil war*".¹

A striving to dodge a resolute, bold struggle for power, and a hope that power itself would fall into their hands, have always distinguished reformists from proletarian revolutionaries. That being the case, they thought there would be no need to smash the old, bourgeois state, to build a fundamentally new, proletarian state on its ruins, and to exert every effort to suppress the overthrown exploiters' inevitable resistance; and when the revolutions began in Europe, and power was in fact in the hands of social-reformists in several countries, they saw themselves in the role (as Friedrich Ebert put it) of "guardians of the old regime" and, while doing nothing to demolish this system, hastened to return the country "to the path of legality".² The Austrian Social-Democrats acted in the same way, not wanting (or being afraid) to exploit the existing opportunities to create a genuinely proletarian government.³

Lenin, closely following the development of the revolutions in Europe, noted that when they began the bourgeoisie found it specially necessary, in order to save its power, to hide the true character of the state as a dictatorship of the exploiters from the people. And the Scheidemanns and the Kautskys, the Austerlitzes and the Renners (one might also add, the Friedrich Adlers and the Bauers) made every effort to depict this state as "popular government", or democracy in general, or "pure democracy". But according to Lenin it was "sheer mockery" to talk like that at a time when "the workers and all working people are ill-fed, ill-clad, ruined and worn out not only as a result of capitalist wage-slavery, but as a consequence of four years of predatory war, while the capitalists and profiteers remain in possession of the 'property' usurped by them

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Letter to American Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 68. Lenin applied this conclusion from the experience of the revolutions of the past to the revolutionary epoch generating a revolutionary situation. To transfer it to all times and other conditions would be incorrect. Historical experience since has shown that a revolution is also possible without civil war. On this point, see pp. 270, 278 below.

² *Verhandlungen der Verfassungsgebenden deutschen Nationalversammlung*, Stenographische Berichte, Vol. 326, Norddeutschen Verlags Anstalt, Berlin, 1920, p. 2.

³ Otto Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution*, translated by H.J. Stenning, Leonard Parsons, London, 1925, pp. 91-96.

and the 'ready-made' apparatus of state power." That was striking evidence of the passage of Social-Democracy, at the decisive moment when its behaviour largely determined the fate of the revolution, "from the class struggle and overthrow of the yoke of the bourgeoisie to getting the proletariat to come to terms with the bourgeoisie, achieving 'social peace' or reconciliation of exploited and exploiters".¹

The preaching of reform and defence of bourgeois democracy when the masses in Europe were thirsting for battle was disastrous not only for the socialist revolution but also for any kind of radical, general democratic reforms that did not even go beyond the context of the capitalist system. That was strikingly demonstrated primarily by the events in Germany and Austria. The false manoeuvres, for instance, around the slogan of "socialisation" (in which Kautsky and Bauer were directly involved), and around the bourgeois democratic constitutions that were then being drafted, did much to help save capitalist regimes. The whole hypocrisy of "democratic legality" was visibly exposed in the foul murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. It demonstrated, as Lenin said, that "'democracy' is only a camouflage for bourgeois robbery and the most savage violence"² in Germany, only "freedom to murder arrested leaders of the proletariat with impunity",³ only "a most frenzied outbreak of civil war" unleashed by the bourgeoisie which the reformists were trying "to talk them out of".⁴

The revolutionary groups and organisations (both those remaining within the old Social-Democratic or centrist parties, and those which, while outside them, did not know how to attract the masses) drew a major lesson from the struggle, viz., that ideological independence was not enough for revolutionaries, that *organisational separateness* was urgently necessary, not only from the right-wing Social-Democrats, but also, moreover, from the centrists. All endeavours to pursue a revolutionary course within the same organisation with opportunists were inevitably doomed to failure.

Rallying of the revolutionary forces of the working-class movement and the formation of revolutionary workers' parties were therefore by no means the arbitrary, willful acts of "splitters", but a normal and necessary process that expressed both continuity as regards the revolutionary heritage of the past and the qualitatively

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Democracy and Dictatorship", Vol. 28, pp. 369, 372.

² V.I. Lenin, "Speech at a Protest Rally Following the Murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. January 19, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 411.

³ V.I. Lenin, "First Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 463.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Report at the Second All-Russia Trade Union Congress. January 20, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 417.

new features of the working-class movement at the stage associated with the first breaking of the chain of imperialism and the beginning of the transition to socialism. This was not a simple process; it came up against many difficulties, and differed in essentials in the various countries.

In Finland the Left Social-Democrats founded a Communist Party after defeat of the revolution. In Germany a party emerged in the very heat of battle from the Spartakusbund, which broke away from the Independent Social-Democratic Party, and the group of Left Radicals, who had never been in the USPD. In Austria only a small group of Left Socialists rallied around the banner of communism. In Hungary a group of Communists and internationalists returning from POW camps in Russia formed the nucleus of the Communist Party, uniting with revolutionary Socialists and left-wing Social-Democrats. In Poland the Communist Party arose from unification of Social-Democracy of Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, and the Polish Socialist Party (Lewica). In several countries Left Social-Democratic parties went over almost wholly to revolutionary positions (Bulgaria, Sweden, Norway). In the Socialist Parties of Italy and France, and among the "Independent" Social-Democrats of Germany, where the tone was set by centrists, but there were strong left-wing trends, a fight developed for a revolutionary orientation.

One of the ideological obstacles to the forming of communist parties and their establishing of links with the masses was the watchword of "Unity of the Proletariat" put forward by Kautsky and his followers. Taking advantage of the working class's natural bias toward unity in the fight against the common enemy, the centrists were in fact trying to "turn back" onto a reformist path those who had taken a very direct part in mass revolutionary actions. They therefore accused the Communists of being "splitters". Karl Liebknecht, exposing the reactionary nature and hypocrisy of the slogans of the "apostles of unity", wrote, not long before his tragic death: "But not every 'unity' gives strength. Unity between fire and water quenches the fire and vaporises the water; unity between wolf and lamb makes the lamb grub for the wolf; unity between the proletariat and the ruling classes sacrifices the proletariat; unity with traitors means defeat. Already today the unity apostles want to end the 'revolution' that has hardly yet begun.

"...Unity with them would be disastrous for the proletariat, would be a sell-out of socialism and the International."¹ That agreed completely with what Lenin had already written before the war: "Unity is a great thing and a great slogan. But what the workers' cause

¹ Karl Liebknecht, *Gesammelte Reden und Schriften*, Vol. 9, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1968, pp. 602-603.

needs is the *unity of Marxists*, not unity between Marxists, and opponents and distorters of Marxism."¹

The reformist leaders, trying everywhere to thwart revolutionising of the masses, began to pool their efforts. The world war had hardly ended when they stepped up their drive to build an international front to counter the revolution. The right wing, and especially the centrists, set about energetically restoring the collapsed Second International on a slightly overhauled platform of social-reformism. The chairman of the International Socialist Bureau, Emile Vandervelde, and his secretary Camille Huysmans, developed vigorous activity along this line. In December 1918 Arthur Henderson, leader of the British Labour Party, proposed holding an international socialist conference simultaneously with, and in the same place as, the Paris Peace Conference. But Clemenceau objected to this, not wanting to see even quite docile "labour representatives" alongside him. The main difficulty was that the jingoist fire fanned by the Social-Democratic leaders of both coalitions during the war, had not weakened after its ending, during the protracted peace negotiations. The Belgian Socialist Party categorically refused to sit round the same table with the German Social-Democrats—the "betrayers of the International", who had voted for the aggressive war. Because of that Vandervelde was even forced not to take part in preparation of the conference and to give up the powers of chairman of the International Socialist Bureau. Gompers, the leader of the American Federation of Labor, declared that the international unification of trade unions should be put off until after the signing of the peace treaty. He wanted in general to avoid a joint gathering of trade union and socialist leaders, as he had always been hostile to the latter.

More important, however, was the fact that all the revolutionary proletarian organisations—the communist parties of the Soviet Republics, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, the socialist parties of Italy² and Romania, and representatives of the Socialist Youth International and the International Women's Secretariat—refused to take part in the conference. The Swiss Social-Democratic Party, too, refused to take part in the conference, which it had been decided to convene in Berne, so that its chairman Gustav Müller, who was Mayor of Berne, was forced to resign.³

The *Berne Conference* of "Workers and Socialists" opened on 3 February 1919. Two days later an international conference of trade

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Unity", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, 1964, p. 232.

² The Italian Socialist Party later sent Oddino Morgari as an observer.

³ Pierre Renaudel, *L'Internationale à Berne; Faits et documents*, Bernard Grasset, Editeur, Paris, 1919, pp. 8-14; Heinz Egger, *Die Entstehung der Kommunistischen Partei und des Kommunistischen Jugendverbandes der Schweiz*, Genossenschaft Literaturvertrieb, Zurich, 1952, pp. 189-92.

union leaders also began work there. Both the party and trade union organisations were represented by around 100 delegates from 26 countries.¹ The right-wing leaders included Arthur Henderson and Mrs. Philip Snowden (Great Britain), the French majoritaires Pierre Renaudel and Albert Thomas, the German Social-Democrats Hermann Müller and Otto Wels, the Austrians Karl Seitz and Wilhelm Ellenbogen, the Swede Hjalmar Branting, and the Dutchman Pieter Troelstra, representatives of the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks and the Armenian and Georgian Mensheviks, and the reformist trade union leaders Léon Jouhaux, Jan Oudegeest, and Banning. There was a considerable group of centrists, among whom there were a few of the Left: the German Independents Karl Kautsky, Eduard Bernstein and Hugo Haase, and Kurt Eisner; the French minoritaires Jean Longuet, Marcel Cachin, Ludovico-Oscar Frossard, and Fernand Loriot; the Austrian Friedrich Adler; the Hungarian Zsigmond Kunfi, the Scotsman J. Ramsay MacDonald; the Spaniard Julian Besteiro, and others. The attempts of Swiss left-wing leaders, led by Fritz Platten, to induce the leftists to refuse to sit together with the social-patriots, or even to organise an opposition of principle, were unavailing.

Henderson, opening the socialists' conference, called for support of the Paris Peace Conference—a conference at which the imperialists had begun to redraw the map of the postwar world. Branting, who was elected chairman, having paid homage to the memory of Jean Jaures, proposed congratulating the “peacemaker” President Wilson. Thomas began a sharp polemic about war guilt. The disagreements were smoothed over with difficulty through the mediation of Kautsky and Eisner on the basis of a mutual amnesty of the chauvinists of both belligerent groups. The German delegates made an evasive statement, in which they condemned the invasion of Belgium and claimed that the German Revolution has wiped out the old system responsible for the war.

As to the attitude of the two conferences to the League of Nations, both passed resolutions equally welcoming its foundation, but stressing the need, in order to “supervise” its activity, to restore both a socialist and a trade union internationals. The resolutions contained compromise wordings about postwar frontiers, the fate of Alsace-Lorraine, and the German colonies. There was no explicit condemnation of colonialism in them.

Both conferences adopted a common International Labour Charter. Loud phrases about workers' aspiration to end capitalist exploitation and wage labour were combined in the Charter with an expres-

¹ Pierre Renaudel, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-14. Many of the trade union representatives, who came from 14 countries, were also delegates at the Socialists' conference.

sion of reformist hopes for government regulation of the conditions of its sale under the aegis of the League of Nations. The Charter, taking into consideration the demands of the proletarian masses, proposed the institution of free compulsory education for children; an eight-hour working day, a weekly rest period of 36 hours; a six-hour day for young workers under 18; the banning of night work for women; institution of a comprehensive system of social insurance; establishment of an employment organisation and other points.

It recommended the forming of a Commission on International Labour Legislation as an integral part of the League of Nations to supervise this, and an International Labour Parliament (consisting of an equal number of trade union and government-appointed delegates) to meet regularly and pass international labour laws having the same force and validity as national laws.¹ The trade union declaration, drafted by Jouhaux, which preceded the Charter, stressed that reforms should not divert them from the ideal of "building a new system" but prepare for it. A special commission was sent to Versailles in order to petition for the admission of "representatives of world labour" to the Peace Conference.²

The central issue in Berne, however, was covered under the item "Dictatorship and Democracy". Socialists gathered together at the height of revolutionary events could not help expressing their attitude to the revolutions in Russia, Germany, Austria, and Hungary. But instead of making a serious class analysis of the real situation, clarifying the prospects for the world revolutionary movement, and defining their own stand, the speakers began to outdo one another in far-fetched counterposings of Western ("pure" or "supraclass") *democracy* and Russian ("Bolshevist" or "Asiatic") *dictatorship*. At the sittings of the commission the French *majoritaires* demanded "repudiation of Bolshevism as a method and tactic", in accordance with the statement they had published on the eve of the conference. Ramsay MacDonald condemned military intervention against socialism in general terms and advocated a parliamentary "democracy inspired by the political and economic principles of socialism". Otto Wels proposed condemning any infringement of democratic rights and freedoms by governments, "whether imperialist or bolshevist". Finally the Branting resolution was moved, which contained an attack on Bolshevism, declaring social reorganisation based on

¹ Lewis L. Lorwin, *Labor and Internationalism*, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1929, pp. 188-189.

² The collapse of these illusions was not long in coming. Clemenceau received the commission but Lloyd George refused to do even that. "Labour's delegates" were not admitted to the Peace Conference. Later, Gompers, and then Jouhaux and G.H. Barnes, were appointed to a committee to draft international labour laws. An International Labour Office was set up under the League of Nations, which subsequently became the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

parliamentary democracy to be the only method possible, rejected the dictatorship of the proletariat, claiming that it was bound to give rise to civil war, and opposed all methods of "socialisation" that did not provide for "methodical development" of the various sectors of the economy. The resolution, however, though mentioning the rise in strength of the forces of international counter-revolution, did not protest against the anti-Soviet intervention of the imperialist powers.¹

Branting's resolution was seen as condemnation of the Russian Revolution and approval of imperialist intervention. The left-of-centre minority headed by Friedrich Adler and Jean Longuet, however, moved their own resolution.² It called for an international rallying of the revolutionary proletariat, and recognised that the Berne conference was only a "first and still very feeble attempt at an international meeting", and that socialist and revolutionary parties from various countries should not be alienated from the International. The authors of the draft resolution, while opposing open condemnation of Soviet Russia, did not even attempt, however, to go into the substance of the issue of proletarian democracy and dictatorship, and made no mention at all of the workers' Soviets, which they tried to justify by lack of information and the fact that the Russian delegates at the conference expressed the view of the minority, while it was necessary "to consider both sides".³

The discussion of both resolutions in the full conference, which took a whole day, showed that there were no differences as regards revolution and "Bolshevism" between Henderson, Kautsky, and Bernstein. Henderson, for instance, spoke of the purely destructive character of Russian Bolshevism. Kautsky claimed that the sole result of the Bolsheviks' activity had been the birth of a "new militarism" and called for support for their opponents, while Bernstein declared that the Bolsheviks in Russia and Germany were "murderers of the revolution". During the discussion the Branting resolution was supported by the whole German delegation, half of the Austrian delegation, part of the French delegation, the British and 17 other delegations, while Adler-Longuet resolution was backed by part of the French delegation, half of the Austrian delegation, and the delegations of Norway, Spain, Greece, and Holland. In the end the "wise decision" was made, viz., to avoid a vote, to consider both resolutions passed, and to send "an authoritative delegation" to

¹ Pierre Renaudel, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-35; *Die Resolutionen der Internationalen Arbeiter- und Sozialistenkonferenz in Bern (3-10 Februar 1919)*, pp. 7-8.

² Friedrich Adler threatened in the commission that if the Branting resolution were passed 33 delegates would quit the conference.

³ *Die Resolutionen...*, p. 9.

Soviet Russia to investigate conditions on the spot.¹ Renaudel, justifying this duplicity, remarked that "the International's action is—probably for a long time yet—a moral action rather than one rigorously coordinated".²

Branting, who had been elected to the Executive Commission (with Henderson and Huysmans), whose job was preparation of a new conference or congress, declared, when closing the conference on February 10, that the International lived again.³ The trade union delegates in turn decided to revive the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) in the immediate future, and commissioned Jouhaux and Oudegeest to convene a special conference for this. Amsterdam was selected as the seat for both provisional executive commissions.

Only one delegate at the Berne Conference, the Frenchman Fernand Loriot, gave an unequivocal, class, proletarian estimate of it in an open letter. The main aim of the organisers of the Berne meeting, he said, had been to condemn revolutionary Russia, white-wash the murderers of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, and paralyse the revolutionary efforts of the French, the English, and the Italian proletariat. "We want to be neither the dupes, nor the accomplices of those anti-socialist and counter-revolutionary doings",⁴ he wrote. An effective response to the "revival" of the social-reformist International was soon given by the international conference of Communists in Moscow.

THE FOUNDING OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

During the revolutionary upsurge after the October 1917 Revolution it became quite clear that the old Social-Democratic parties and the Second International, even in "renewed" form, were unable to translate the opportunities of the new revolutionary epoch into life. Only proletarian parties of a new type, uninfected by opportunism and social-chauvinism, ideologically united on the principles of revolutionary Marxism and militant international solidarity, could lead the struggle of the millions coming into action, who were demanding a radical change of social relations. Lenin and the Bolsheviks already understood this from the many years' experience of their own Party when the Second International collapsed. But

¹ The Soviet Government gave permission for "the entry of any bourgeois commission" and guaranteed it opportunity for first-hand investigation (See *Pravda*, 28 February 1919). The journey, however, was not made.

² Pierre Renaudel, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

³ I. Lentz, *A History of the Second International*, Moscow, 1931, p. 210 (in Russian).

⁴ *The Communist International*, No. 1, 1919, col. 77.

revolutionaries in other countries needed years of seeking and testing to reach the same conclusion. The first months of the European revolution finally convinced them of the need to set up independent Communist parties. The need to found a united international communist organisation had also matured.

The new International was an urgent need in order to revive the international revolutionary solidarity of the national contingents of the working class, divided by the war and the fit of jingoism and chauvinism, and in order to co-ordinate the efforts of those involved in the spontaneous revolutionary upsurge that was sweeping many countries in various degrees, and to give them singleness of purpose. The Communist International had to help form and consolidate the still weak Communist parties and other left revolutionary groups and organisations, and provide the conditions for collective working out of revolutionary strategy and tactics. The victory of the October Revolution and the birth of the first proletarian state in Russia had made it possible to found the Communist International in Moscow, where it was more convenient than anywhere else to ensure communication between and mutual help of the proletarian revolutionaries of all countries and nations.¹

At the end of 1917 the Bolsheviks had already tried to convene a conference of the Left Zimmerwaldists and revolutionary internationalists of various countries "who take the stand of Soviet government and accept the need to fight the imperialist governments within each of the belligerent sides".² The All-Russia Central Executive Committee decided to send a special delegation to Stockholm to establish contact with the revolutionary groups of other countries and prepare for the conference, but it was unable to get to Sweden.³ Imperialist Germany's offensive, and then foreign military intervention and Civil War, held up arrangements for an international conference.

Almost a year passed; at the end of December 1918 Lenin and other members of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) sent a letter to the revolutionaries of Germany, Austria, and Hungary. Noting that the latter had to wage the revolutionary struggle in unusually difficult conditions, the leaders of Soviet Russia wrote: "We, however, not only believe but *know* that the German, Austrian, and Hungarian proletariat must discard

¹ Y.G. Temkin, B.M. Tupolev, *From the Second to the Third International*, Moscow, 1978; V.V. Aleksandrov, *Lenin and the Comintern. From the History of the Development of the International Communist Movement's Theory and Practice*, Moscow, 1972 (both in Russian).

² *Izvestia*, 24 December 1917.

³ R. Stolyarova, "Lenin and the Founding of the Communist International", in: *From the History of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 8-11 (in Russian).

the fetters in which the bourgeoisie is keeping them with the aid of its democratic agents". They would see that "the vaunted democratic republic and national assembly are nothing more than a dam to withstand the pressure of the revolutionary wave". They would need to understand that the only way out for them lay "in their own government that will ruthlessly put down any resistance by the bourgeoisie; a government that will become a powerful lever of the socialist restructuring of society in deeds and not in words". Our Party, the Bolshevik Party, the letter said, "which was considered a handful of 'madmen' at the beginning of the Revolution and has now held state power firmly for more than a year, is particularly happy to see that in Germany, Austria, and Hungary fraternal parties are growing that are pursuing our common aim, socialism, by our common road, viz., *through the dictatorship of the working class*".¹

In those days Lenin drafted a concrete plan to arrange an international Socialist conference to found a Third International. In a note to G. V. Chicherin he twice underscored that it must be convened "urgently", "very soon". When formulating the International's draft platform, he took as his basis (1) "the theory and practice of *Bolshevism*", (2) the programme declaration of the German Spartacus League *Was will der Spartacusbund?* (written by Rosa Luxemburg).

Lenin considered that the Third International should not only include the communist parties already founded, but from the start should also incorporate those parties and groups that were *drawing near* to Bolshevism, including existing groups within social-democratic parties. At the same time, while delineating this circle, he suggested inviting to the constituent congress those who resolutely stood for a break with the social-patriots, who were "for a socialist revolution *now* and for the dictatorship of the proletariat ... who are in principle for 'Soviet power' and against *limitation* of our work by bourgeois parliamentarism, against *subordination* to it, and who recognise the fact that the Soviet type of government is *higher* and *closer* to socialism".²

These requirements show that Lenin considered the central issue in founding a Communist International to be ideological and political unity of the advanced contingents of the working class of all countries, based on the principles of revolutionary Marxism. These principles were clearly set out in the appeal to the First Congress of the Communist International, written on his instructions and

¹ The appeal was first published in the Hungarian Communists' paper *Vörös Újság* on 15 January 1919. In the anthology of documents and materials *The Bolsheviks' Struggle for the Establishment of the Communist International* (Moscow, 1934), it is incorrectly dated the end of October (pp. 103-104 [in Russian]).

² V.I. Lenin, "To G.V. Chicherin", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, 1969, pp. 119, 120.

edited by him.¹ The appeal defined the attitude of the new International to social-chauvinists and centrists; "ruthless struggle" against the former, but "in relation to the 'centre', tactics of drawing the most revolutionary elements away from it, and ruthless criticism and exposure of its leaders. Organisational demarcation from the centrists is quite necessary at a certain stage of development."² The idea of a bloc with the best elements of revolutionary syndicalism was also important. The appeal, signed by representatives of eight parties, was published in *Pravda* on 24 January 1919, and was a vital document in the preparations for the founding of the Communist International.

The International Communist Conference began work in the Kremlin on 2 March 1919. When opening it on behalf of the Central Committee of the RCP(B), Lenin stressed the importance of the event: "Our gathering has great historic significance." The bourgeoisie was terror-stricken at the growing workers' revolutionary movement. This is understandable if we take into account that "the world revolution is beginning and growing in intensity".³ A presiding committee was elected, consisting of Lenin, Hugo Eberlein (pseudonym Albert), representing the Communist Party of Germany, and Swiss Communist Fritz Platten.

In addition to the RCP(B) and the Communist parties of the other Soviet Republics, Communist parties had been formed in six European countries, and Left Socialist or Communist groups were operating in most of the countries of the West; 52 delegates from 35 organisations (19 with a vote, and 16 with consultative status) were able to take part in the conference. The following 21 countries were represented: Austria, Bulgaria, China, Finland, France, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Iran, Korea, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, the RSFSR, the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the USA. Present, too, were separate delegations from the communist organisations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania and Byelorussia, Turkestan, the Ukraine, and the Volga Germans.

After overcoming certain difficulties connected with the imperative mandate of the German delegate,⁴ the conference constituted

¹ Lenin included a note in it, in particular, that the Spartacists' document was to be "republished by us in all the most important languages".

² *The First Congress of the Comintern. March 1919*, Moscow, 1933, p. 254 (in Russian).

³ V.I. Lenin, "Opening Address at the First Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 455.

⁴ The delegate of the Communist Party of Germany Hugo Eberlein had been instructed by his Central Committee to oppose immediate founding of a Communist International. He took an active part in all the conference's work

itself on 4 March as the *First (Constituent) Congress of the Communist International*.

From their discussion of one of the main items of the agenda—the platform of the international communist movement (rapporteurs—Hugo Eberlein and N. I. Bukharin), the delegates came to a very important conclusion, that a new epoch had opened with the triumph of the Russian Revolution and the revolutionary wave that had risen in other countries, “the epoch of the disintegration of capitalism, the epoch of the communist revolution of the proletariat”. In accordance with that a central task was posed: the proletariat’s winning of political power and breaking up of the bourgeois state machinery; the counterposing of the Soviet system to bourgeois democracy. The road to victory, the platform said, lay through mass struggle, a preliminary condition of which was a break with the direct opponents of the revolution—the right-wing Social-Democrats and the Kautskian “centre”.¹

Although the revolutionary struggle in Central Europe directly linked with the ending of the World War had not led to the establishment of real proletarian rule in any one of the countries at that time, the revolutionary movement was on the upswing. The congress took place in a feeling of confidence that victory of the international socialist revolution was close at hand. The delegates, approaching events with that yardstick did not consider the carrying out even of considerable democratic reforms and the rise of a number of new national states as sufficient achievements of the proletarian and national struggle. Lenin’s idea that “February” had taken place in Germany and not “October”, the statements of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg that the German Revolution had not gone beyond a bourgeois-democratic one, were seen only as statements of the obvious fact that the socialist revolution had simply *not yet* developed in Germany and other European countries. The German delegate, for instance, stressed that “the real revolution in Germany is still ahead”, while the Austrian delegate affirmed that there had been no revolution at all in Austria.² There was no mention then of the possibility of a period, or stage, of bourgeois-democratic or

and was a permanent member of the presiding committee. As he subsequently wrote, Lenin’s arguments, and those of the other delegates, convinced him, but he was forced to abstain from voting. After the Congress the KPD was one of the first parties to join the Communist International (See *The First Congress of the Comintern*, pp. 4-5, 119-21, 132 (in Russian); Hugo Eberlein, “Spartakus und die Dritte Internationale”, *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, February 1924, No. 28-29, pp. 306-307; Hugo Eberlein [Max Albert], “Die Gründung der Komintern und der Spartakusbunds”, *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, 1929. Heft 9-11, pp. 676-79.

¹ *The First Congress of the Comintern*, pp. 173, 178 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 90.

national-democratic revolutions in Germany and the states arising on ruins of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Understanding of that came much later.¹

Lenin, meanwhile, had already come to very important conclusions then, which introduced new elements into ideas about the probable course of the international revolution. It has been developing more slowly, more unevenly, and in a more zigzag fashion than expected; and its social content proved to be different in a number of countries.

Formerly it had been assumed that in the West, where class antagonisms were more developed than in Russia, because of the more intensive development of capitalism, "the revolution would proceed on lines differing somewhat from those of this country, and that power would pass directly from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat. Events in Germany, however, indicate the contrary."²

It had become clear that certain preparatory stages were necessary in advanced countries as well as in more backward ones, and possibly intermediate stages, too, and that there was also no direct path to power for the proletariat in them. When thinking about lines of approach to the proletarian revolution, Lenin analysed the general trend of its movement to its culmination, which he (like all European revolutionaries) expected in the not-so-distant future: "First the spontaneous formation of Soviets, then their spread and development, and then the appearance of the practical problem: Soviets, or National Assembly, or Constituent Assembly, or the bourgeois parliamentary system; utter confusion among the leaders, and finally—the proletarian revolution."³

That too schematic posing of the problem did not seem to satisfy him completely, and he then added that it was impossible, after nearly two years of revolution, to limit oneself to that, and that "concrete

¹ The well-known historian and activist of the international revolutionary movement, Theodore Rothstein, was still writing in 1925: "In fact there were no revolutions in Austria and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at all" (Introduction to the Russian translation of Otto Bauer's *The Austrian Revolution*, p. IV). In the Theses on the Tasks of the Comintern and the RCP(B) in connection with the Enlarged Plenary Session of the E.C.C.I., adopted by the 14th Conference of the RCP(B) at the end of 1925, the 1918 revolution in Germany was evaluated as a bourgeois and not proletarian revolution (see *The CPSU in Resolutions*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1970, p. 208 [in Russian]). Only after World War II, however, after long discussions among Marxist historians, was a description of the revolutions of 1918-1919 in the countries of Central Europe as bourgeois-democratic (or national-democratic) fully confirmed.

² V.I. Lenin, "Session of the Petrograd Soviet, March 12, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 19.

³ V.I. Lenin, "First Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 470.

decisions" should be taken about spreading the system of Soviets.¹

The idea of the working class's winning political power was central in the debates and resolutions of the Congress. It was seen then not just as the goal of that stage of the revolutionary struggle, but as the watchword of direct action for the proletariat of several countries. The Manifesto of the Communist International "To the Workers of the World" proclaimed that "the Third International is the International of open mass action, of revolutionary realisation".² It concluded with the call: "*Under the standard of the Workers' Councils, under the banner of the Third International, in the revolutionary struggle for power and the dictatorship of proletariat, proletarians of all countries, UNITE!*"³

The main document of the Congress was Lenin's theses and report on bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Non-class or above-class arguments about "democracy in general" and "dictatorship in general", he said, were "an outright travesty of the basic tenet of socialism, namely, its theory of class struggle".⁴ He explained that a scientific approach to the concepts "democracy" and "dictatorship" could only be a class one. The decisive point, moreover, was which class exercised its dictatorship, and over what class, and for what classes a given dictatorship was democracy.

Drawing on the experience of history, including that of the fight for proletarian power in Soviet Russia, Lenin reaffirmed Marx's conclusion about the historical inevitability of the dictatorship of the proletariat. No single class, he said, had ever come to power without going through a period of forcible suppression of the overthrown classes. If dictatorship had been historically necessary to the bourgeoisie in order to break the resistance of the nobility, it was even more necessary to the proletariat, which had to eradicate all exploiter classes, and to whose access to power the capitalist class put up the most frenzied resistance. According to Lenin, "proletarian dictatorship is not only an absolutely legitimate means of overthrowing the exploiters and suppressing their resistance, but also absolutely necessary to the entire mass of working people, being their only defence against the bourgeois dictatorship...".⁵

In the historical circumstances of those times the stressing of the need for revolutionary coercion against the bourgeoisie was particularly topical and urgent, since the Civil War and foreign intervention in Soviet Russia, and the events in Finland and Ger-

¹ *Ibid.*

² *The Communist International*, No. 1, 1919, Petrograd, p. 10.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "First Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 457.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 463.

many, had demonstrated as convincingly as possible that the bourgeoisie did not stop at any atrocities in order to strangle the revolutionary workers' movement. But, while pointing out the necessity for and inevitability of employing revolutionary violence, Lenin at the same time stressed that its concrete forms and the severity of the coercive measures adopted against the exploiter classes would be different. As mentioned above, in Chapters 2 and 3, Lenin frequently drew attention to the fact that many of the measures due to the concrete circumstances of struggle in Russia were not necessarily obligatory elsewhere.

Contrary to the claim of the bourgeoisie and Social-Democracy that the socialist revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat were inseparable from bloody civil war, vast numbers of victims, and unparalleled destruction of productive forces, Lenin recalled that the imperialist bourgeoisie had only just slaughtered ten million and maimed 20 million in its war for world domination. It considered those casualties "justified" while branding the incomparably fewer losses in the proletariat's emancipation struggle "criminal".¹

The bourgeois world's denunciation of civil war and red terror was a piece of the most monstrous hypocrisy, said the Manifesto adopted by the Congress: "Civil war is forced upon the labouring classes by their arch-enemies..."

"The Communist parties, far from conjuring up civil war artificially, rather strive to shorten its duration as much as possible, and, when it has become an iron necessity, to minimise the number of its victims, and above all to secure victory for the proletariat."² As the experience of the Russian Revolution had shown, the Bolsheviks used every possibility for the working class to take power by peaceful means, and in the first months of Soviet government had shown leniency and even magnanimity toward their enemies, until the latter unleashed bloody white terror. Hence it followed the Communists needed to disarm the bourgeoisie promptly in all countries, to arm the workers, and to form a worker and peasant army "as a protector of the rule of the proletariat and of its Socialist constructive work".³

One of the first jobs of the socialist revolution and the new proletarian government was to break up the bourgeois state machinery. The Platform of the Comintern, drawing on the Marxian theory of the state further developed in Lenin's writings, said:

"The organised power of the bourgeoisie is the bourgeois machinery of the Government, with its capitalist army, commanded by bourgeois and Junker officers; with its police and gendarmerie,

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Letter to American Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 70

² *The Communist International*, No. 1, 1919, p. 9.

³ *Ibid.*

with its gaolers and judges.... The conquest of political power does not simply mean a change of personnel in the Ministries. It means the overthrow of the hostile State machinery ... and the arming of the proletariat."¹ The proletariat could not "take over" the state machinery of the bourgeoisie, adapted to suppression, oppression, and deception of the labouring masses; and it could only make partial use of the agencies of economic administration.

The main thing about proletarian rule, however, the Congress resolutions explained, was its constructive tasks, i.e. organisation of the building of a new, socialist society, rather than coercion and violence. The Platform spoke of expropriation of the bourgeoisie, socialisation of the banks and main means of production, commercial agencies and agricultural estates, and their conversion into socially managed enterprises. It said in particular that "small property will in no way be expropriated, and that proprietors who do not exploit hired labour will not be exposed to any violent measures". The peasantry and artisans "will be gradually drawn into the Socialist organisation by example and by practice which will demonstrate to it the advantages of the new order". It stressed that all qualified technicians and specialists should be employed and that "the proletariat will not oppress them, but, on the contrary, will give them for the first time the opportunity for unfolding their creative capacities". The proletarian government, concerned to develop the productive forces, would "unite science and labour". And along with that, the proletarian dictatorship itself, necessary in the transition period, would become obsolete "in proportion as the resistance of the bourgeoisie is broken and the bourgeoisie is expropriated" and gradually becomes a labouring social stratum.²

The dialectics of the essence of the dictatorship of the proletariat is that revolutionary coercion itself is exercised by the working class through an extension and deepening of democracy and on the basis of a new, revolutionary legality. For the first time in history it is a matter of a dictatorship in relation to the exploiter minority with the aim of providing the broadest democracy for the overwhelming majority of the people. The dictatorship of the proletariat, Lenin noted, therefore "must inevitably entail not only a change in democratic forms and institutions, generally speaking, but precisely such a change as provided an unparalleled extension of the actual enjoyment of democracy by those oppressed by capitalism—the toiling classes."³

The main feature of the new, proletarian democracy is the working

¹ *The Communist International*, No. 1, 1919, p. 49.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 51, 52.

³ V.I. Lenin, "First Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 464-65.

people's real opportunity to enjoy democratic rights and freedoms, and to take part in the running of public affairs.

"...The form of proletarian dictatorship that has already taken shape, i.e., Soviet power in Russia, the Räte-System in Germany, the Shop Stewards Committees in Britain and similar Soviet institutions in other countries, all this implies and presents to the toiling classes, i.e., the vast majority of the population, greater practical opportunities for enjoying democratic rights and liberties than ever existed before, even approximately, in the best and the most democratic bourgeois republics."¹

Through years of struggle the workers had only won from the bourgeois-democratic state recognition of the right to organise, while the proletarian state itself was encouraging their organisation. "For the first time in history," Lenin said soon afterward, "Soviet power has not only greatly facilitated the organisation of the masses who were oppressed under capitalism, but has made that organisation the essential permanent basis of the entire state apparatus, local and central, from top to bottom."² The state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, being interested in the broadest involvement of the masses in the running of public affairs, cannot be content simply with representative democracy. Lenin, when describing the state machinery of Soviet government before the October Revolution, predicted that it would provide a chance "to combine the advantages of the parliamentary system with those of immediate and direct democracy, i.e., to vest in the people's elected representatives both legislative *and executive* functions. Compared with the bourgeois parliamentary system, this is an advance in democracy's development which is of world-wide, historic significance."³

The system of Soviets, the Congress said in its resolutions, is a very broad organisation of the working masses irrespective of trade and other differences, an organisation capable of renewal and making it possible for newer and newer sections to be involved in this sphere and opening its doors to all working people of town and country who are close to the proletariat. The Soviets could rally the majority of the working people and counterpose themselves to the state machinery of the bourgeoisie; and in that way they eased the road to the working class's winning of power. With victory of the socialist revolution the Soviets became a state form of proletarian rule that overcame the masses' alienation from the administrative machinery,

¹ V.I. Lenin, "First Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 465.

² V.I. Lenin, "Draft Programme of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 106-107.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 103-104.

and promoted involvement of the broadest masses "into constant and unfailing, moreover, decisive, participation in the democratic administration of the state".¹

The resolution moved by Lenin, and unanimously passed by the Congress, set the task of explaining the need for Soviets to the masses. That was all the more important, since Lenin was convinced, after listening to the speeches and talking with delegates, that the significance of the system of Soviets was still not clear to the broad masses of the politically educated German workers, "because they have been trained in the spirit of the parliamentary system and amid bourgeois prejudices".² It was also recommended to spread Soviets among the village poor and farm labourers, and to try and win communist majorities in the Soviets.

The type of Soviet rule was thus now seen, allowing for the practical experience not only of Russia but also of Germany, Austria, and Hungary, as the most suitable form of exercising proletarian government. "Dictatorship of the proletariat," Lenin said at the Congress, "until now these words were Latin to the masses. Thanks to the spread of the Soviets throughout the world this Latin has been translated into all modern languages; a practical form of dictatorship has been found by the working people."³

While stressing the international significance of Soviets, he also considered various forms of proletarian democracy to be possible. In marginal notes on the draft theses "Principles of the Third International", he pointed out, on the eve of the Congress, the inaccuracy of the formulation about Soviets as the sole form of proletarian rule and recommended substituting "of the *type* of the Commune and Soviets (but not necessarily 'Soviets')".⁴

Later, during discussion of the Programme of the RCP(B), he disagreed with Bukharin's rigid statement that Soviet rule was the "*universal, general form of the proletarian dictatorship*". We must not anticipate events, Lenin stressed: "We say that the *Soviet type* has become internationally significant. Comrade Bukharin mentioned the British shop stewards' committees. They are not quite Soviets. They are growing, but they are still in the womb. When they are born, then 'we shall see'. But to say that we shall grant the British workers Russian Soviets will simply not stand up to criticism."⁵ Accordingly a point on spread of the "Soviet form" of the revolutionary

¹ V.I. Lenin, "First Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 465.

² *Ibid.*, p. 472.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 455.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 54, 5th Russian edition, Politizdat, Moscow, 1965, p. 502.

⁵ *Eighth Congress of the RCP(B), March 1919, Minutes*, Moscow, 1959 (in Russian). pp. 41, 105 (Our italics—Ed.).

movement was included in the RCP(B)'s Programme, as follows: "i.e. a form aimed directly at exercising the dictatorship of the proletariat". The phrase in the draft Programme, that the Republic of Soviets was the "sole type of state corresponding to the transition period from capitalism to socialism",¹ was not in the final text.²

In Lenin's speeches, and in the proceedings of the Comintern Congress, the essence of bourgeois democracy as the state form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie was also gone into deeply. In its class content the broadest bourgeois democracy remains machinery for suppression of the working class and the other working people by a handful of exploiters. The freedoms it proclaims are formal or limited, because, given the dominance of capital and private property, there can be no equality between capitalist and worker in the exercise of freedom of assembly, speech, and the press. While granting the masses a right, bourgeois democracy does not ensure them real exercise of it, alienates the working people from the machinery of government and administration, allowing them at best only limited participation in decision-making, while leaving the powerful levers of real power in the hands of Big Business.

Exposure of the class essence of bourgeois democracy as a form of capitalist domination, and pointed criticism of its defects, were not only of fundamental theoretical importance, but were also aimed at striking a blow at the reformist theories by which both the capitalists and Social-Democracy were trying to build defences against the socialist revolution at a time of revolutionary upsurge, and also a bridgehead for an offensive against it.

The sharp criticism of bourgeois rule then did not, of course, mean an ignoring or underestimation of the value of the bourgeois-democratic rights and freedoms won by the working class through decades of stubborn, persistent struggle. Lenin's theses and report, and the other Congress documents, stressed the need for Communists to put forward and defend general democratic demands on the peas-

¹ *Eighth Congress of the RCP(B)*..., pp. 375, 390.

² It should be noted that J.V. Stalin, when expounding Lenin's idea of Soviet rule as a form of the proletarian dictatorship, deprived it of its inherent flexibility. He said, for example, that "the Republic of Soviets is the political form ... within the framework of which the economic emancipation of the proletariat, the complete victory of socialism, *must be accomplished*."

"The Paris Commune was the embryo of this form; Soviet power is its development and *culmination*."

The quotation from Lenin, in which Stalin underlined the "*only* form", and which he cited as confirmation, was taken not from Lenin's 1919 speech on the international significance of Soviet power but from the Theses on the Constituent Assembly, written at the end of 1917, and relating only to the Russian situation. (See: J.V. Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Works*, Vol. 6, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1953, p. 126.)

ant question and in actions against the war, etc. The principle of uniting democratic and socialist tasks, already developed by Lenin (as we said above¹) in the period before the October Revolution, had been confirmed by living experience. In the light of the revolutionary events in Russia and Europe, moreover, this principle had become even more important.

The Congress of the Comintern gave an authoritative answer to the question of the driving forces of the rising proletarian revolution. When defining the social basis of proletarian rule it proclaimed the need in principle for a firm, friendly alliance of the working class, the poorest peasants, and the semi-proletarians of town and country. But the whole complexity of the problem of how to draw the masses to the socialist revolution was still not understood then by many of the young Communist parties and their leaders. The German delegate Hugo Eberlein, for example, considered that Communists should rally around themselves "only those workers who definitely accept the dictatorship of the proletariat and the class struggle".² The idea of winning over the old trade unions also did not get wide support at the Congress; on the contrary, doubts were expressed that it was at all possible to revolutionise them.³ Some delegates oversimplified the process of the deepening of the contradictions of capitalism and the route and pace of the world socialist revolution, or treated them too rigidly. One can also find statements in the proceedings of the Congress that the emancipation of oppressed countries would come about only after socialist revolutions in the metropolitan countries.⁴ The Communist movement still had to tackle these and other concrete issues and test them in practice.

It was all the more important, therefore, that the Comintern and the young Communist parties could rely from the start on a truly scientific theory when determining their main tasks. "Marxism," Lenin wrote in reference to this, "illuminated by the bright light of the new, universally rich experience of the revolutionary workers, has helped us to understand the inevitability of the present development. It will help the workers of the whole world, who are fighting to overthrow capitalist wage-slavery, more clearly to appreciate the aims of their struggle, to march more firmly along the path already outlined, more confidently and firmly to achieve victory and to consolidate it."⁵

The Congress proclaimed Communists' unshakeable belief in the principles of proletarian internationalism. It pointed out the absolute

¹ Chapter 1.

² *The First Congress of the Comintern*, p. 73 (translated from the Russian).

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97, 100.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁵ V.I. Lenin, "Won and Recorded", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 479.

need for the revolutionary proletariat of all lands to co-ordinate their actions on an international scale, and always to allow for the interests of the international revolution in their own actions. It called for the mutual help—economic and otherwise of the proletariat in various countries in which proletarian government had been established, in the interests of joint defence of the gains made and in building the new society. The Comintern pledged to “give support to the exploited colonial races in their fight against imperialism, so as to advance the ultimate overthrow of the imperialist world system”.¹

The Congress resolutely condemned the intention of the Berne Conference to resurrect the Second International. At the same time it saw in that conference’s refusal openly to approve of the imperialists’ armed intervention in Soviet Russia “indirect proofs of the sympathy of the West European proletariat with the Russian proletarian revolution, and of its readiness to take up arms against the imperialist bourgeoisie”.²

In its appeal To the Workers of the World the Congress expressed its feelings of gratitude to and admiration for the Russian revolutionary proletariat and the Bolshevik Party. Noting that the great revolution had already made considerable progress, it pointed out that responsibility for the economic difficulties and famine in Russia was wholly that of internal and external enemies who, through sabotage, conspiracies, and military intervention, had forced the Soviet government to turn a great part of its resources to building a new army. The Congress called on the workers of all countries to demand non-interference by their governments in the internal affairs of Soviet Russia, the ending of military intervention and the withdrawal of all foreign troops, recognition of the Soviet government, the establishment of diplomatic and commercial relations, lifting of the blockade, and the sending to Russia of “hundreds and even thousands of organizers, engineers, instructors and experienced workers, especially metal workers, to provide the young socialist republic real aid in the economic sphere”.³

The Congress condemned the white terror in Russia and the Ukraine, and in Finland and Germany, and called on the workers of all lands “to do their utmost towards the final abolition of this system of murder and robbery”.⁴

The formation of the Communist International became an event of enormous importance. “In all its political and ideological content, and in all its activities,” said Lenin, it “is implementing the revolu-

¹ *The Communist International*, No. 1, 1919, p. 52.

² *Ibid.*, p. 61.

³ *V.I. Lenin and the Communist International*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 149-52 (in Russian).

⁴ *The Communist International*, No. 1, 1919, p. 67.

tionary doctrine of Marx, cleansed of bourgeois opportunist distortions".¹ A guiding organisation had been created for the world communist movement capable of promoting both ideological and organisational growth of all the national revolutionary parties of the proletariat, and realisation of their active role in the class battles of the new epoch. From the outset it strove to draw into it those representatives of Communist parties and groups in all countries that had the capacity to combine national traditions of class struggle with use of generalised world experience. At the same time the new International relied on the real basis of the emergent international revolution, Soviet Russia. It is in that sense that one must understand Lenin's words that the Third International had not only "gathered the fruits of the work of the Second International, discarded its opportunist, social-chauvinist, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois dross", but had also "*begun to implement the dictatorship of the proletariat*".²

Contrary to what its enemies said, the Comintern did not at all seek to dictate the further course of the international revolution from Moscow. Lenin saw the very founding of the Comintern as the registration and recording of what had already "been gained not only by the Russian workers, but also by the German, Austrian, Hungarian, Finnish, Swiss—in a word, by the workers of the world.... We have embodied in our resolutions, theses, reports and speeches what has already been won".³

He never lost a chance then to recall and stress that the "different nations are advancing in the same historical direction, but by very different zigzags and bypaths".⁴ In an article for the first issue of *The Communist International* he specially explained to Communists in other countries that not only any Marxist, but anyone conversant with modern science in general, would undoubtedly give a negative answer to whether he believed in a uniform and simultaneous transition of various countries to socialism: "There never has been and never could be even, harmonious, or proportionate development in the capitalist world. Each country has developed more strongly first one, then another aspect or feature or group of features of capitalism and of the working-class movement." Recalling Chartism in England, the heroic risings of the workers in France in 1848 and 1871, the passing of supremacy in the international labour move-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Draft Programme of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 124.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Third International and Its Place in History", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 307.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Won and Recorded", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 478, 479.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). Speech Closing the Debate on the Party Programme", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 195.

ment to Germany, he noted that it had then passed to Russia. It was there that *Soviet* or *proletarian democracy* had come to life, which was the second step of paramount importance in the history of the world (after the Paris Commune) toward proletarian rule. "World history is leading unswervingly towards the dictatorship of the proletariat, but is doing so by paths that are anything but smooth, simple and straight."¹

After the Congress a Bureau of the Executive Committee of the Comintern was set up, which included the following: A. Balabanova, V. V. Vorovsky, G. E. Zinoviev, G. K. Klinger, M. M. Litvinov, L. M. Karakhan, N. I. Bukharin, J. A. Berzins, A. Menshoy. Later it also included A. Rudnyansky, Julian Marchlewski, I. Milkič, P. I. Stučka and Karl Radek. Lenin and other leaders of the RCP(B) attended the most important sessions. On 18 July 1919 the Small Bureau of four to six members was formed within the Bureau of the ECCI. Many foreign Communists, coming to Moscow, were also drawn into the work of the Executive Committee.²

Hardly had the delegates of the Constituent Congress left than the development of revolutionary events in Europe graphically demonstrated that it had correctly formulated the main line of the struggle. In Hungary, and then in Bavaria and Slovakia, where the revolution succeeded in advancing beyond the first stage, it led to the formation of *Soviet Republics*.

The claims of bourgeois politicians and social-reformists that Soviet power could only be established on Russian soil proved false, as was to be expected. They had always scared the European workers, Lenin said, by claiming that the Russian Revolution had led only to war, famine, and disruption, and that Bolshevik rule was a usurpation of power and maintained by force. "People learn from experience. It is impossible to prove merely by words that Soviet power is just. The example of Russia alone was not sufficiently intelligible to the workers of all countries. They knew that there was a Soviet there, they were all in favour of the Soviet, but they were daunted by the horrors of the sanguinary struggle."³ In Hungary, however, Soviet rule was established peacefully.

Though he understood the great difficulties of the Hungarian Revolution, Lenin nevertheless hoped that it would be able to show "to the whole world that which was concealed in Russia—i.e., that

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Third International and Its Place in History", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 308, 309.

² *The Second Congress of the Comintern. July-August 1920*, Moscow, 1934, pp. 594-95 (in Russian).

³ V.I. Lenin, "Extraordinary Plenary Meeting of the Moscow Soviet of Workers' and Red Army Deputies, April 3, 1919. Report on the Domestic and Foreign Situation of the Soviet Republic", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 271.

Bolshevism is bound up with a new, proletarian, workers' democracy, that is taking the place of the old parliament".¹ For in countries where the bourgeoisie would not put up such a violent resistance as in Russia, Soviet government would "be able to operate without the violence, without the bloodshed that was forced upon us by the Kerenskys and the imperialists".²

Unfortunately, only the establishment of Soviet power was comparatively easy and peaceful in Hungary (and also in Bavaria). The imperialists soon threw all their power against the Soviet Republics in Central Europe and crushed them. The Communist International tried to raise the European proletariat in solidarity, but the opposition of the opportunists handicapped the friendly actions of the workers of Europe. Since the activity of the masses remained high, it depended on the leaders of the working class at that time whether the European revolution would proceed in an upward direction, or begin to roll back. Lenin wrote in the autumn of 1919: "If the revolution were even to begin now, even if only in its compromising stage and in only one or two of the Entente Great Powers this would *immediately* put an end to the civil war in Russia, would immediately liberate *hundreds of millions* in the colonies, where resentment is at boiling-point and is kept in check only by the violence of the European powers." Such a revolution "would completely *undermine* the rule of the world bourgeoisie, destroy the very *foundations* of its domination and leave it no safe haven *anywhere*".³

But the Social-Democratic leaders and ideologists had other cares; they were searching for more and more new "proofs" that the revolutionary road was not the one for the West.

THE CONFRONTATION OF REVOLUTIONARY AND REFORMIST IDEOLOGIES

The development of revolutionary events in both Russia and Central Europe forced the sharpest possible *counterposing* of the dictatorship of the proletariat and bourgeois democracy to the fore. That applied to the sphere of *theory* as well as to political practice. Ultimately this ideological and theoretical opposition was a reflection of the bitter world struggle of the two main class forces.

Since the early days of the proletarian revolution in Russia many of its enemies tried to mask their counter-revolutionary activity by slogans of "freedom", "equality", "pure democracy". Throughout the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

² *Ibid.*, p. 271.

³ V.I. Lenin, "How the Bourgeoisie Utilises Renegades", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 33.

world references to infringements of freedom and equality, and to abolition of democracy, soon became "the most common and popular objection" to the socialist revolution.¹ By "removing" or veiling the *class* content of the concepts "freedom", "democracy", and "dictatorship", the Bolsheviks' opponents shifted the whole problem first to the plane of accusations of a "cult of violence", and then to the plane of historical difference between "East" and "West".

The practice of the revolutions in Central Europe, having put the cardinal question of "Soviet rule or National Assembly?" on the agenda, brought the polemic about the forms and content of revolutionary power onto the international arena. When Lenin answered the challenge of his opponents, he made the contrasting of the dictatorship of the proletariat and bourgeois democracy the kernel of his report to the Constituent Congress of the Communist International and of other speeches of the time.²

It became the natural divide in the working-class movement between revolutionary Communists on the one hand, and right-wing Social-Democrats and centrists on the other; the demarcation continued along this line with inexorable sharpness. The dispute primarily concerned the *role of Soviets* in the revolution, the possibility of "*combining*" *Soviet rule and bourgeois parliament*, and more broadly the existence or absence then of a "*democratic alternative*" to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

When bringing out the theoretical basis of these disputes Lenin recalled that, in the epoch of the destruction of feudalism and establishment of a bourgeois-democratic system, the bourgeoisie's slogans were freedom and equality (and also property). The slogans of the epoch of the destruction of capitalism must, he considered, be "the abolition of classes; the dictatorship of the proletariat for the purpose of achieving that aim; the ruthless exposure of petty-bourgeois democratic prejudices concerning freedom and equality". "Until classes are abolished," he said, "all arguments about freedom and equality should be accompanied by the questions: freedom for which class, and for what purpose; equality between which classes, and in what respect? Any direct or indirect, witting or unwitting evasion of these questions inevitably turns into a defence of the interests of the bourgeoisie, the interests of capital, the interests of the exploiters."³ Because the formal recognition of freedom and equality is usually

¹ V.I. Lenin, "On the Struggle Within the Italian Socialist Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1974, p. 392.

² See, for example, Lenin's speech "Deception of the People with Slogans of Freedom and Equality" on 19 May 1919 at the First All-Russia Congress on Adult Education, 6-19 May 1919, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 339-43.

³ V.I. Lenin, "On the Struggle Within the Italian Socialist Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 392-93.

only a cover-up under capitalism of their actual absence for the vast majority of the population.

Lenin paid great attention in this connection to the difference in principle between Soviet rule and bourgeois parliamentarism (no other type of parliamentarism then existed). In explaining why workers' Soviets, which had been brought into existence by the initiative of the masses themselves, were *a more democratic power* than even the best models of bourgeois parliamentary democracy, he drew on the historical variability of each and every form of state power, the forms of democracy included. He thus had no doubt of the value of bourgeois parliamentarism and democracy as "institutions ... highly progressive compared with medieval times".¹

At the same time, he said, "it would be sheer nonsense to think that the most profound revolution in human history, the first case in the world of power being transferred from the exploiting minority to the exploited majority, could take place within the time-worn framework of the old, bourgeois, parliamentary democracy, without drastic changes, without the creation of new forms of democracy, new institutions that embody the new conditions for applying democracy, etc".² Having the experience of Soviet Russia primarily in mind, but also allowing for the kernels of experience of the Soviets arising in Central Europe, Lenin pointed out that the proletarian or Soviet democracy shifted the emphasis from *formal* proclamation of political rights and freedoms for all citizens to *de facto* granting of them to the proletariat and working peasantry, i.e. the exploited majority. Since the real content of democracy could only be actual involvement of the people in *administration of the state*, the main shortcoming of bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism was that the masses of the working people, while having equal rights before the law, "have in fact been debarred by thousands of devices and subterfuges from participation in political life and enjoyment of democratic rights and liberties". The army remained an instrument of oppression, while the officialdom and the judiciary apparatus were the greatest hindrance to the actual realisation of democracy.³

Lenin saw the superiority of Soviet rule in the fact that the whole of the old machinery of coercion was broken up with its establishment and the masses of the workers and peasants were constantly, continuously, and moreover decisively taking part, through the Soviets, in administration. By facilitating the election and recall of deputies, overcoming the alienation of representative institutions from the

¹ V.I. Lenin, "First Congress of the Communist International, March 2-6, 1919. Theses and Report on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, March 4", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 459.

² *Ibid.*, p. 464.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 465.

masses, implementing the principle of the responsibility and accountability of officials, and establishing equality of citizens irrespective of sex, religion, race, or nationality, Soviet government made it possible to bring the labouring masses into the closest possible contact with the government machinery.¹

While Lenin brought out the decisive superiority of the Soviet system, he by no means depicted it as "a miracle-working talisman". "It does not ... heal all the evils of the past" at one go, he said.² He by no means considered the specific forms that had taken shape in Russia to be quite perfect, without defects. The fact that the European proletariat, which "instinctively grasped" the value of the Soviets, sometimes had difficulty in understanding the Russian experience of Soviet government, Lenin explained by the actual contradiction between "the backwardness of Russia and the 'leap' she has made over bourgeois democracy to the highest form of democracy". Such a contradiction, he remarked, should not disconcert an educated Marxist: "It would have been surprising had history granted us the establishment of a *new* form of democracy *without* a number of contradictions".³ But for theorists like Kautsky this contradiction became their pet means of discrediting Soviets.

Kautsky continued to "belabour" the Soviets with formal, legalistic arguments at the height of the revolutions in Central Europe, as, for instance, that they did not represent all sections of the population, and that parliament allegedly had "greater moral authority". But his doctrinaire constructs had already been refuted by the tempestuous spread of the idea and practice of Soviets. The rise of more or less developed organisations of the Soviet type in Germany, Austria, Hungary, and in Italy, Poland, the Netherlands, and Norway would have been inconceivable if the appropriate preconditions for them had not existed in those countries.

The ideological and political need to set up new organisations alongside the traditional ones—political parties and trade unions—was due to the fact that it was precisely organisations of the Soviet type, with their informal, very dynamic democracy, and their drive to draw into the movement the broadest "lower orders" who were not covered by the parties and trade unions, and with their continuous renewal of membership and leadership, that best corresponded to the revolutionary circumstances.

¹ V.I. Lenin, "First Congress of the Communist International...", p. 466; *Idem.*, "Draft Programme of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 106-110; *Idem.*, *Complete Works*, Vol. 38, 5th Russian edition, pp. 424-27.

² V.I. Lenin, "Speeches on Gramophone Records. What Is Soviet Power?" *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 249.

³ V.I. Lenin, "The Third International and Its Place in History", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 308.

In many countries there were also direct forerunners of new proletarian bodies immediately in enterprises. In Germany, for instance, workers' commissions and workers' stewards had already been functioning for a long time, and during the war committees of revolutionary stewards had sprung up which became the initiators of the new workers' Soviets. Workers' Soviets had arisen similarly in Austria and Hungary. In Italy factory Soviets had grown out of the factory commissions; in Great Britain the shop stewards' committees were the embryo of such an organisation, but had not, incidentally, become fully developed.

It was the inherent democracy of the Soviets that also caused their wide, rapid spread among soldiers, and in countries, moreover, where workers' Soviets had not succeeded in taking shape. At the same time the setting up of Soviets in the villages encountered considerable difficulties in Europe, and only in Hungary did Soviets of Labouring Peasants play a certain revolutionary role.

The most vigorous attempt to discredit the Soviets, and to narrow their significance by means of Left Social-Democratic theorising, was made by the Austrian Marxist philosopher Max Adler. In the summer of 1919 he admitted, in a pamphlet entitled *Democracy and the Soviet System* in which he called the Soviets "organs of permanent revolution": "The idea of Workers' Soviets has now become probably the dearest conception to the heart and mind of the revolutionary proletariat." In order to demolish it, or at least undermine it, Adler declared that Soviets were more "a product of the *Russian* working-class movement than ... a fruit of the revolution", and that the enthusiasm for them displayed in Germany and Austria was inspired by the Russian Revolution, the first to break the bitter yoke of the war, and not in the least by a conscious need. He contemptuously said that it corresponded to "mass psychology, since it is almost weak-mindedly underlain by the instinct to mimic", and did his best to persuade the Austrian workers that Soviets had been "distorted" in Russia by its backwardness and "immaturity" for socialism, and had become agencies of "dictatorship of the leaders" and even of "terrorism".¹

In contrast to Kautsky, Adler said that there was no conclusion in Lenin's valuable *The State and Revolution* "that was not also part of the basic ideas of revolutionary Social-Democracy".² He affirmed that Marxism calls for breaking up of the bourgeois state machinery and establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that illusory bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism were hostile to the proletariat, and that Soviets were much more able, than the system of parliamentary democracy, to overcome the masses' alienation

¹ Max Adler. *Demokratie und Rätesystem*, Ignaz Brand Verlag, Vienna, 1919, pp. 20, 21, 27.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

from power. The theory and practice of the division of powers, he said, "was mistakenly taken to be a principle of democracy", because it led to the conversion of administrative institutions into a fossilised civil-service machinery. The most important thing about Soviets corresponded to genuine democracy, viz., that they "*not only vote but also want to carry out the decisions themselves without delay, and thereby try to realise the will of the proletariat directly*".¹

Adler dissociated himself from the German and French reformists of "the Ebert-Scheidemann-Noske type" (but not from the Austrian ones), and claimed that the disagreements between the Austrian Marxists and the Communists were not one of principle. The "imaginary gulf" between them would disappear if Communists would "only" recognise that "Bolshevism is simply a special tactic of Communism", that the Russian Soviets, which had emerged in an entirely different setting, could not be transplanted to Central Europe, that the "Soviet Republic" was not a "miraculous charm", and the workers' Soviets should not strive for it, because the conditions for the dictatorship of the proletariat and the realisation of socialism had allegedly not matured either in Austria or in the rest of Europe.²

By taking such a roundabout path to the standpoint of all reformists, Max Adler came back to Kautsky's view that workers' Soviets should not be treated as "long-term organising principles of a new society, in which socialism is allegedly being realised", but simply as "*new fighting forms of the socialist class struggle*". Their job, and even the point of their existence, was "socialist, revolutionary propaganda", and no more. Since the socialist dictatorship should not employ "coercion in regard to the rest of the population that had not yet declared for socialism", it was necessary to keep the National Assembly alongside the Soviets, so as "to give the non-socialist part of the population the possibility of representation". Consigning to oblivion what he himself had just said about the incompatibility of two class dictatorships, and passing to the Hilferding position of "combining" them, Adler led his readers to the following conclusion: "The more propaganda for socialism increases, the more powerful it will be, however, through the spoken and written word than through machine-guns and revolutionary tribunals". That way, he concluded, he saw "a road to the dictatorship of the proletariat without terrorism".³

Such radical-sounding arguments, even when not directed against the Soviets but in favour of them, were capable of misleading quite a few revolutionary-minded workers, diverting them from struggle

¹ Max Adler, *Demokratie und Rätesystem*, pp. 38, 39.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 12, 19, 25.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 28, 31-32, 36-37.

for real Soviet power. At the same time this radicalism, albeit in words, was indicative of the actual acuteness of the revolutionary situation of the time. Otto Bauer testified that in the summer of 1919, when this pamphlet of Adler's came out, you could only hear "Dictatorship of the Proletariat!", and "All Power to the Soviets!" in the streets of Austrian cities.¹ And Max Adler concluded his pamphlet with those watchwords. Such attempts to gloss over the sharpness of the contradictions between the two class dictatorships once more confirmed that the only correct, principled Marxist approach at that time was Lenin's and the communist movement's tough *counterposing* of Soviet rule to bourgeois parliamentarism.

By contrast, Otto Bauer made every effort to weaken the working class's revolutionary onslaught in the socio-economic sphere. In his pamphlet *The Road to Socialism* he tried to suggest to workers who aspired to immediate "socialisation" of the capitalists' property, that this could only be done if a number of reservations were observed; vis., (1) payment of compensation; (2) socialisation, not nationalisation of property, in various ways that preserved military-national industrial concerns (i.e. state-capitalist monopolies), with involvement of "workers' commissions" or Soviets in management. It was also possible to alienate big estates only with full compensation (on this point Bauer retreated even further than Kautsky). Socialisation of the banks should also not affect the interests of the owners.

Bauer summed up reformist wisdom in the following words: "The expropriation of the expropriators cannot and should not be carried out in the form of a brutal confiscation of the capitalists' and land-owners' property, because it cannot be done in that way other than at the cost of a violent destruction of the means of production, which would pauperise the people themselves and block the source of the people's income". Taxation, he claimed, was the means of orderly regulated expropriation; he even calculated that it would be possible initially to take on average "nearly four-ninths of the incomes" of the propertied, and even more later on.²

When Lenin read these arguments, he recalled that their author had once spoken in favour of a proletarian revolution. But hardly had it started than "the soul of the pedant and philistine got the upper hand, and he grew frightened and *began to pour* the oil of *reformist phrase-mongering on the troubled waters of the revolution*".³

This "dear good soul" and most painstaking writer of learned books, the best of the Social-Democratic leaders, has "forgotten one tiny

¹ Otto Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

² Otto Bauer, *Der Weg zum Sozialismus*, Berlin 1919, pp. 5-6, 8, 28-29.

³ V.I. Lenin, "A Publicist's Notes", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 360.

detail"; he has "forgotten that such a 'systematic' and 'regular' transition to socialism (the transition which undoubtedly would be the most advantageous to 'the people', abstractly speaking) presumes an absolutely secure victory of the proletariat, the absolute hopelessness of the position of the capitalists, the absolute necessity for them to display the most scrupulous obedience" to the proletarian government.¹ Such a set of circumstances was theoretically and abstractly possible in some small country after the proletariat's triumph in the biggest countries, but it was inconceivable in the actual conditions of the postwar world, when the capitalists had already unleashed the most atrocious civil war against the proletariat.²

The section of Bauer's pamphlet referred to by Lenin was quite sufficient to evaluate the theoretical level of his argument. But the last section, entitled "The Prerequisites of Socialisation", showed that it was not just "pedantry" and "forgetfulness". Its main point was Bauer's conviction (which he did not dare express frankly and openly) that the revolution should be "put off". He tried to persuade his readers surreptitiously, by hints, that socialist measures, even the most cautious, could not be carried out then, but only *after* the conclusion of a peace treaty, when the majority of the people were motivated by "socialist convictions and the will for socialism", only after the union (*Anschluss*) of Austria and Germany, and so on and so forth. True, he did not rule out the possibility of "another road"—by a "terrible assault" as in Russia. But it was precisely in order to prevent that possibility—quite actual at the time—that both Bauer and Kautsky tried to embellish "their road" to socialism, and painted the Russian road in the most sombre colours, intimidating the workers.³ Thus, in their desire to put off the revolution and socialism "until better times", the centrist theorists of Social-Democracy completely merged with the right-wingers.

In the latter half of 1919, after the fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic and the subsidence of mass revolutionary activity in Austria and Germany, the centre of gravity of ideological disputes about the alternative "dictatorship of the proletariat or bourgeois democracy" shifted from the role of Soviets to a more general plane. In the autumn of 1919 Kautsky published a booklet in Berlin entitled *Terrorism and Communism. A Contribution to the Natural History of the Revolution*,⁴ and in London the leader of the Independent Labour Party, Ramsay MacDonald, published a pamphlet entitled *Parliament and*

¹ V.I. Lenin, "A Publicist's Notes", *op.cit.*, p. 360-61.

² *Ibid.*, p. 359-61.

³ Otto Bauer, *Der Weg zum Sozialismus*, pp. 30-32.

⁴ Karl Kautsky, *Terrorismus und Kommunismus. Ein Beitrag zur Naturgeschichte der Revolution*, Verlag Neues Vaterland, Berlin, 1919.

Revolution,¹ while an anonymous pamphlet *World Revolution*² appeared in Vienna.

Kautsky openly condemned "Bolshevist methods" in his new pamphlet, too, seeing nothing in them but tyranny and violence, terrorism and "monstrous fratricide". The Bolsheviks, in his learned opinion, "did not stick to their Marxism in this situation", had yielded to "mass psychosis", and by making "*the naked will of the masses the driving wheel of the revolution*" had thereby "degraded the Socialist movement". In Moscow or Budapest, he alleged, dreading above all the independence of the masses, "no one any longer asks what policy is possible and necessary in the given economic conditions, but starts from the point that, since socialism now is desirable for the proletariat, it is the job of Socialists, wherever they come to power, to carry it out *at once*".³

Kautsky, deriding the dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet rule as "the philosopher's stone" and sought-after panacea, declared it to be a special impertinence of Lenin and the Bolsheviks that, not wanting to follow the road of democracy, they had created a new theory of "dictatorship as a counterweight to democracy", and put forward a thesis of the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat throughout the world, including the old democracies of the West, and not just in Russia. But "Soviet dictatorship" here, he prophesied, would inevitably lead to civil war, complete economic disruption, famine, and finally to victory of counter-revolution. He was not even ashamed to lay the blame for Social-Democrat Noske's White Terror (*Blutregime*) on the revolutionaries: Noske was allegedly following in the footsteps of the Bolsheviks, while the revolutionaries had, by their "putschism", unleashed a "fratricidal struggle among proletarians" in Germany, rather than a real class struggle (and threatened to continue it for decades). "In Western Europe," he claimed, "democracy ... has passed to the masses in flesh and blood," and there was no need to hurry. The Bolsheviks, he blasphemed, were awaiting the world revolution like "the Messiah".⁴

Lenin was acquainted with the new work of Kautsky's and remarked that its author, in accusing revolutionaries of terrorism, was

¹ J. Ramsay MacDonald, *Parliament and Revolution*, The National Labour Press, Ltd., Manchester, 1919.

² *Weltrevolution*, Verlag Wiener Volksbuchhandlung und Co., Vienna, 1919. The author is thought to be Otto Bauer, but Julius Braunthal does not mention this work in his biography of Bauer, though in expounding the content of another brochure by Bauer he inadvertently paraphrases ideas from *Weltrevolution* as well. See Julius Braunthal, "Otto Bauer. Ein Lebensbild."—Otto Bauer, *Eine Auswahl aus seinem Lebenswerk*, Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, Vienna, 1961, p. 45.

³ Karl Kautsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8, 61, 110, 121.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 138-52.

trying to cover up the fact that not just Noske but "... the world bourgeoisie has organised and is waging a civil war against the revolutionary proletariat.... All semblance of revolutionary understanding, and all semblance of historical realism ... have disappeared.... Kautsky is *actually on the side of the bourgeoisie* in the civil war that is being waged, or is obviously prepared, throughout the world."¹

Many revolutionaries replied to the lies of the bourgeoisie, Kautsky, and the Austrian Marxists about "Bolshevist terror". The Austrian Social-Democrat Alexander Täubler, former editor of the Vienna *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, who had returned from a POW camp in Russia, said in a pamphlet *A Vindication of the Bolsheviks* that the Constituent Assembly would have been quite unsuitable to cope with the tasks being successfully dealt with by the Soviet government in Russia, because "like a reduced image of the old bourgeois society, it had been at best a suitable tool to produce an appropriate constitution for that *old* bourgeois society...." Characterising Lenin, Täubler wrote: "I measure the value of peace in the human lives saved and the human happiness produced, and admire Lenin's action with a grateful heart as the greatest act that any man has yet achieved on the earth in this century. Lenin not only deserved the Nobel Peace Prize for that; he has earned *immortality*."²

At the same time J. Eisenberger, a German, had published a pamphlet *Within Call of Lenin* in Munich, which he began with an open letter to Kautsky. "To my no little regret," he wrote, "I had, on my return from Bolshevik Russia to my German homeland, to see for myself that the heads of our politicians are stuffed with the most confused ideas about the Russian Revolution.... Your statements betray ... that the sources of your history frequently spring from unfortunate Party quarrels.... You should either go ahead and restudy the facts with model earnestness—or renounce the reputation of a scrupulous, pragmatic historian and any leading role in the German Revolution!"³ Basing himself on documents and personal impressions, Eisenberger systematically demolished Kautsky's argument about the role of Soviets, terror, and the military and economic outlook for Soviet Russia.

But other works appeared whose authors, while admitting the need for the proletarian dictatorship in Russia in words talked the workers of European countries out of it in every way. The anonymous author

¹ V.I. Lenin, "How the Bourgeoisie Utilises Renegades", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 31-32.

² Alexander Täubler, *Eine Verteidigung der Bolschewiki. Politische Betrachtungen eines österreichischen Sozialdemokraten in der russischen Kriegsgefangenschaft*, Verlag Wilhelm Müller, Vienna, 1919, pp. IV, 6, 14.

³ J. Eisenberger, *Lenin aus nächster Nähe. Die russischen Genossen bei der Arbeit. Kritik der Schrift Kautskys: "Terrorismus und Kommunismus"*, Verlagsgenossenschaft "Der Kampf", Munich, 1919, pp. 9-10.

of *World Revolution*, for example, appeared to draw a line between himself and the views of the bourgeoisie and Kautsky that Bolshevism was "madness and a crime". He was even ready to admit its positive role in the special Russian conditions as "a force destroying" the obsolete system; that the World War had opened an "epoch of proletarian revolution", in which "the Bolshevik Soviet dictatorship" also had its place. But Bolshevism is not a model, "not the world revolution but only one of its temporary, passing forms and phases". As soon, however, as he came to talk about Austria and Europe in general, he at once joined forces with Kautsky, and tried, without sparing strong language, to persuade the European worker that the drive for proletarian dictatorship led only to "senseless suicide of the proletariat".¹ In order to divert workers from revolutionary struggle, this author decided to prove its lack of perspective "theoretically". The fate of the world revolution, he claimed, was not being decided in Russia at all, or even in Central Europe. The world economic and political position of Great Britain, and especially of the United States, had been considerably strengthened by the war. Recalling that Marx had "correctly forecast" the shifting of the centre of gravity of the international labour movement from France to Germany after Germany's victory over France in 1870-71, he extrapolated the following analogy: "The victory of the Anglo-Saxon countries in the World War will have the result that *the centre of gravity of the international labour movement will be shifted from the European continent to England and America.*" When Lenin read that passage, he wrote an ironic comment in the margin.²

According to Marx, we know, the shifting of the centre of gravity was connected with the fact that the German labour movement was then displaying great theoretical and political maturity. That, however, did not interest the author of *World Revolution* because he wanted to prove something else. "*It is not in the vanquished countries,*" he stressed, "*not in Russia, Hungary, or Germany that the class struggle between capital and labour, or the future social order, will be decided, but in the countries that will rule the world and shape the world economy henceforth, i.e. in Great Britain and America.*"³ It was therefore necessary to look West, not East. And since there was neither hunger nor unemployment in the victor countries and they had the prospect of favourable economic circumstances, there could be no revolution or dictatorship of the proletariat in them in the foreseeable future.

The outlook was so cheerless that the pamphlet's anonymous author, who still wanted to appear a revolutionary, had to seek—and

¹ *Weltrevolution*, pp. 17-19.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4. For Lenin's notes on *Weltrevolution*, see *Lenin Miscellany XXIV*, Moscow, 1933, pp. 216-52 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

found—comfort. England, he alleged, had already been “in a process of rapid, far-reaching social reorganisation since the Boer War” (he preferred to keep silent about America), which was leading “to democratising and socialising” via gradual reforms, via “the simple pressure of strikes, election struggles and parliamentary shifts of power” without “bloody civil war and dramatic revolutionary battles”.¹ The conclusion was clear: Austrian, German, and other continental European workers had no need to make a revolution but simply to wait patiently.

Ramsay MacDonald did not flaunt Marxian jargon in his pamphlet, but declared himself a convinced Socialist and democrat, and advocate of gradual reforms.

“Today we are in revolutionary times” caused by the war, he wrote. The working class, conscious of its role, had begun to demand that its aspirations be met immediately. In Russia labour had risen against capital, and “Lenin, the master mind of the Russian revolution”, had tried to make a real reform of society. But international capital had no reply ... except to hurl Denikin at the head of Lenin, not because Lenin is bad or because Denikin is good, but simply because Lenin must be crushed... “Labour is drawn to Lenin ... because he is fighting its battle”. The Russian Revolution had “not ... committed an atrocity but what they themselves (the ruling classes under capitalism.—*Ed.*) have committed or condoned”. The difference was that the revolution had “committed these ‘atrocities’ in its striving for a Social Democratic Republic”, and that the victims had been “unusual”; they were “of the classes who own newspapers and who command megaphones. Therefore, for once, people are bidden to be shocked at the evils of a class struggle.”²

MacDonald firmly declared that the “Allied attack upon Russian Socialism ... created the Red Terror, it has maintained the revolutionary tribunals, it has been responsible for the executions of politicals. The Recording Angel, who sees more truly than men see, has put down the crimes of the past years in Russia not to the Soviet Government, but to France, Great Britain, and America, and on their doorsteps history will lay them.”³

Passing from Russia to Great Britain and other Western countries he recognised that “parliamentary government has become a capitalist institution, and will remain a capitalist fortress”. Nevertheless he decidedly rejected resort to revolutionary methods in Western countries and tried to convince his readers that the revolutionary moods were passing and the storms abating. “The argument ‘We must make a Revolution in order to transform capitalism into Socialism’,

¹ *Weltrevolution*, pp. 7-8.

² J. Ramsay MacDonald, *Parliament and Revolution*, pp. 11, 14-15, 19-20.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

is false," he said declaring that "the preparation before the Revolution must be one of political propaganda, which creates the new Society in the bosom of the old as the butterfly grows in the chrysalis.... The party which is to be most successful in establishing a Socialist Commonwealth by it is that which is to depend upon freedom rather than force... A dictatorship to maintain the revolution in its critical eruptive stages may be tolerated; but a dictatorship through the period of reconstruction... is absolutely intolerable."¹ In an article on the Third International, published in the French Socialists' paper *L'Humanité*,² Ramsay MacDonald declared that its establishment had been unnecessary and even harmful because the split within West European Social-Democracy should have been avoided. The Russian experience was of no use to Western Europe, he claimed. Lenin reproduced his arguments in full in an article in *The Communist International* and noted that they convinced one of the direct opposite, viz., that a decisive, irrevocable theoretical and practical political break between the Comintern and the Berne International was dictated by their fundamentally different approaches to the socialist revolution. "For the proletariat," he wrote, "needs the truth, and there is nothing more harmful to its cause than plausible, respectable, petty-bourgeois lies." Unity was impossible with those who denied the capitalists' bribery of the upper crust of the working class, and the departure of the Second International's opportunist leaders from the revolution, or their recognition of it in words alone. At a time when Communists considered it their job, when working among the masses, "to really assist the revolution, the approach of which *even* Ramsay MacDonald is obliged to admit", he and other leaders of the Berne International did not even think of "inculcating upon the masses the idea of the inevitability and necessity of *defeating* the bourgeoisie in civil war".³ They continued to "frighten the capitalists with the menace of revolution, to scare the bourgeoisie with the menace of civil war in order to obtain concessions from them and get them to agree to follow the reformist path".⁴

In fact Otto Bauer fought with all his might to exploit the menace of Bolshevism and "dictatorship of the Soviets" to induce both the Entente powers and the Austrian bourgeoisie "not to go too far", but he himself undid his own efforts, frightening not so much the

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 31-32. Lenin made ironic comments on these and other similar statements on the margins of his copy of MacDonald's pamphlet (see *Lenin Miscellany XXIV*, pp. 253-85, in Russian).

² J.R. MacDonald, "La Troisième Internationale", *L'Humanité*, 14 April 1919.

³ V.I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Third International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 501, 504, 508.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 507-08.

bourgeoisie as himself and his own supporters. In the spring of 1920 he published a thick booklet with the title *Bolshevism or Social-Democracy?*¹, which Kautsky, who had long declared Social-Democracy's attitude to "Bolshevist methods" to be the most "central problem of socialism", hastened to call "a classic work of socialist literature".² How did Bauer so gladden his teacher, with whom he sometimes disagreed?

The first pages of the preface would seem to be the antithesis of what Kautsky was persistently saying. Bauer toasted the Russian Revolution in a fervent, almost sentimental key. Russia, formerly the citadel of European counter-revolution, had now, he wrote, "become the arena of the mightiest proletarian revolution". For the first time the proletariat had seized power there, and was striving to build a socialist system. "The capitalist world is trembling", and "is waging its war against the proletarian revolution by diplomatic intrigues, with cannon and howitzers, ... belt-tightening hunger blockade, and a flood of printers' ink, misrepresentation, falsehoods, and slanders". The proletariat of all countries, however, was sympathising all the more strongly with the Russian proletariat. "For the first time the international proletariat, split and torn asunder by the war, is united in daily vehement protest against the intervention in Russia. It has won its first victories, by forcing the Western powers to withdraw their troops from Russia."³

His tone, however, soon changed. It was dangerous to sympathise with Russia, it seemed, because the Western proletariat might change its traditions and ideas by doing so, since "disillusionment with democracy and enthusiasm for the Russian Revolution are decoying the proletariat onto the road of Bolshevism".⁴ Bauer saw it as his job to counter this danger. His whole brochure was permeated with a desire to substantiate the fundamental difference of conditions and methods, and the opposing stands of Social-Democrats and Communists. In trying to bully the European reader and prove, whatever the cost, that "the methods of the Russian Revolution" were quite inapplicable in Europe, Bauer deliberately exaggerated the difference in social structures of Russia and the countries of the West. By stressing the higher proportion of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia in the West, and the closer links of those "middle strata" with capital (both economically and in terms of their predilection for nationalist and imperialist ideology), the influence of reactionary clerical parties in the countryside, and so on, he in fact

¹ Otto Bauer, *Bolschewismus oder Sozialdemokratie?*, Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, Vienna, 1920.

² Cited in Julius Braunthal, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

³ Otto Bauer, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

opted for arguments *against revolution in Europe*. He said, for instance, that while the proletariat could bring the Russian peasants under its leadership the peasants of Western and Central Europe were lined up in a compact front against the workers. They would not accept the authority of the workers' Soviets; it was impossible to impose it on them by force; and "in no case can the revolution win if it has no support at all in the countryside".¹

Bauer devoted Section 14 of his book to a theoretical substantiation of a long series of similar oppositions, entitled "Dictatorship and Democracy". In it he suggested that there were five "social power factors" (*soziale Machtfaktoren*), as follows: (1) the numerical strength of the classes; (2) the nature, strength and efficiency of their organisation; (3) their place in the process of production and distribution, which determines the economic resources at their disposal; (4) the strength (*Stärke*) of their political interests, mobility, activity, and capacity for sacrifice; and (5) their level of education, and ability to influence members of their own class and other classes by ideological means and the attractive power of their ideology.²

There was nothing original in Bauer's advancing these factors to characterise the social weight, strength, and influence of classes; they had been formulated long before in one way or another in Marxian works.³ But by manipulating "factors" and "means of coercion", he tried to "deepen" the concepts of "democracy" and "dictatorship" in such a way as to give him the chance to say: "Democracy is that form of the state in which the balance of power is *exclusively* decided by the social power factors, and not altered through the application of material means of force and power in favour of one class." Even Kautsky had not thought up such a profound definition of "pure democracy".

According to Bauer the balance of power (or strength) in a democratic state was governed by *all* the factors he named. The more numerous a class, for instance, the more strongly it affected election results, and the more representatives it had in the people's army. The better organised the proletariat was, the stronger its influence on the membership and activity of the democratic parliament. He had to admit, it is true, that the bourgeoisie was able, by its wealth, to affect the voters through its press, by spending more on election campaigns, and so on. But the proletariat, too, could effectively influence the legislature—"by a stoppage of work". From that it

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

² *Ibid.*, p. 109.

³ See, for example, V.I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, 1977, p. 316; "A Great Beginning", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 421; *Lenin Miscellany XI*, Moscow, 1933, p. 391 (in Russian).

followed that "the 'common will' of a democratic state is the simple resultant of the social power factors".¹

The democratic state was therefore the propertied classes' instrument of domination only so long as the proletariat was few in numbers. Why had the proletariat of Germany, Austria, and other countries not yet taken power? Simply because "the broad sections of workers had not yet been liberated from the influence of the capitalist press, capitalist election humbug, and capitalist education". As soon as the proletariat was a majority of the electorate, however, and became enlightened (under capitalism!), democracy "would become the instrument of their power, democracy would be proletarian democracy". No revolution was needed for that: it would be brought about in fact by the miraculous "social power factors". Bauer, it is true, recalled that "the democratic state also, of course, rests, like any state, on power and force". But it, he alleges, "employs force of arms" not to keep the exploited in check, and not to suppress strikes, break up demonstrations, etc., but "only in order to ensure operation of its laws, ordinances, and orders against resistant minorities". But the power of the Soviets (just like Wilhelm II's overthrown monarchy!) allegedly rested on a contradiction between power relying on force and power governed by social factors, and was founded on "*violation of the social power factors* (Vergewaltigung der sozialen Machtfaktoren)".²

Is it any wonder that Lenin was deeply outraged when he read these arguments? Just for this phrase of Bauer's about violence "against the social power factors", he noted ironically, "we would put up a monument to him in his lifetime ... if we could do as we please in Vienna". But then, Lenin said, summarising: "Opportunism is our principal enemy. Opportunism in the upper ranks of the working-class movement is bourgeois socialism, not proletarian socialism." Its carriers are "better defenders of the bourgeoisie than the bourgeois themselves. Without their leadership of the workers, the bourgeoisie could not remain in power."³ That had not only been shown by the history of the Kerensky regime in Russia, he added, but also revealed by the latest experience in Germany, Austria, France, Britain, and the USA.

In spite of the assurances of MacDonald, Kautsky, and especially Otto Bauer, all their arguments in favour of the "democratic alternative" to Bolshevism, Soviet government, and the dictatorship of the

¹ Otto Bauer, *Bolschewismus oder Sozialdemokratie?*, pp. 103-113.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 111, 119-20.

³ V.I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International. Report on the International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International, July 19, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 229, 231; *Lenin Miscellany XXXVII*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 218, 223-24 (in Russian).

proletariat consisted in diverting the masses *from revolution* against capitalism, and frightening them of it, rather than proposals for other, but equally *revolutionary* methods and forms of struggle leading to establishment of proletarian power. This "democratic alternative" was therefore no more than a means of talking the Social-Democrats out of revolutionary actions and, in fact, out of struggle for power and socialism. The time when this polemic was being waged, moreover, was one of very bitter class battles during which the fate of the international revolution was being decided. The spreading of illusions about the possibility of a "democratic alternative" therefore objectively served as ideological help for the working class's enemies in time of stormy revolutionary upheavals—irrespective of any one leader's subjective intentions. Sizeable numbers of the proletariat remained receptive of, and susceptible to, the soothing prophecies of social-reformist leaders and their demoralising preaching of waiting for "better times".

THE LESSONS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE

When Lenin was analysing the state of the revolutionary movement in the West in the spring of 1920, he repeated almost word for word what he had said the year before: "In the early period of the revolution many entertained the hope that the socialist revolution would begin in Western Europe immediately the imperialist war ended; at the time when the masses were armed there could have been a successful revolution in some of the Western countries as well."¹ Assuming that, Communists had oriented themselves on exploiting the extremely rare historical possibility of a vigorous, joint blow at the capitalist system in several countries. "It was an opportune moment," Lenin recalled later, "for the proletariat to have done with the capitalists at one stroke."²

Why was it that the socialist revolution in Europe not only did not win out, but did not even develop its full strength? Deep understanding of the whole set of general and concrete causes of this phenomenon did not come immediately, although Lenin had already disclosed the main ones hot on the heels of events.

The objective, above all economic, prerequisites for the socialist revolution undoubtedly existed in the developed capitalist countries. That was confirmed by the powerful socio-economic and political

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Speech at a Meeting of the Moscow Soviet in Celebration of the First Anniversary of the Third International, March 6, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 417.

² V.I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at the Fourth All-Russia Congress of Garment Workers, February 6, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, 1977. p. 113.

upheavals that accompanied the world capitalist system's entry into the epoch of its general crisis. The picture of the postwar world was characterised by an immeasurably greater aggravation of all the capitalist contradictions than before the war. As Lenin said in 1920, the war had flung nearly 250 million people (in Russia, Germany, the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, and Bulgaria) into a state of poverty, hunger, and ruin. The thousand million population of the colonies were subjected to crushing oppression and exploitation. The countries that retained their prewar boundaries but had fallen into dependence on America had a population of 250 million, while the population of countries "whose top stratum, the capitalists alone, benefited from the partition of the world", was about the same. "Exploitation by finance capital, the capitalist monopolies has increased many times over." The economic and financial system was everywhere in disarray, and the disparity between wages and prices had grown enormously. Lenin summed up the general situation as follows: "All over the world, the bourgeois system is experiencing a tremendous revolutionary crisis."¹

The existence of a revolutionary crisis was the real basis for possible revolutionary action. But the depth of the crisis and the balance of class forces were not the same in the different countries. Revolutions broke out in several countries (Finland, Germany, Austria, Hungary) in the circumstances of passing from war to peace, but in the victor countries (France, Britain, the USA) things did not reach the level of a "nation-wide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters)",² and a direct struggle for power did not develop. But where revolutions had begun, the situation of the ruling classes, too, had not become "absolutely hopeless". The position of the bourgeoisie, economically developed, with many years' experience of full or partial domination, who had permeated all levels of the social structure and state machinery, was more powerful and deep-rooted than in Russia. The ruling classes of Germany, Austria, and other countries, allowing, among other things, for the Russian experience, were able to mobilise all their forces and reserves against the revolution.

The fact that the revolutionary struggle only developed in Europe after the end of the war had an adverse effect on it. In Russia the Bolsheviks' slogan of peace had been a powerful means of revolutionary mobilisation of the broadest masses. In the West the bourgeoisie had control of the issues of the peace settlement, and the watch-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International. Report on the International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International, July 19, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 218, 227.

² V.I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 85.

word of peace had ceased to be a revolutionising one. On the contrary, the ruling circles of both coalitions succeeded in exploiting the elaboration of peace terms to inflame new waves of nationalism and jingoism, and to drown pacifist moods to a considerable extent by the demagogic hullabaloo accompanying the founding of the League of Nations. Although the contradictions between victors and vanquished, and the squabbling over frontiers and the repartition of spheres of influence and colonies became very acute, the imperialists were able to reach an understanding on joint fleecing of Germany and her allies. Only the most class-conscious workers in the Entente countries protested at the oppressive Versailles system; considerable sections of the public, on the contrary, linked their hopes of peace and an improvement in their personal position with it.

The international bourgeoisie immediately encircled Soviet Russia in a military and economic blockade, and exerted every effort to "strangle" the first-born of the international revolution "at its birth" (as Winston Churchill put it).¹ Although the imperialists did not succeed in crushing it as they strangled Soviet Hungary and Soviet Bavaria, they did Russia enormous material damage, and plunged her people into extreme hardship and need. And they hypocritically depicted this as a result of the revolution and the Bolsheviks' activity. An immense propaganda machine, employing the services of renegades and collaborators worked to discredit the revolution and the Soviet regime. Even then, in spite of all that, the Entente was forced to recall its soldiers, and the international proletariat supported Soviet Russia by mass demonstrations and actions at its most critical moments, which was an indefeasible demonstration of the strength of the revolutionary uptrend.

The bourgeois rulers of the various countries, and not just those of Finland, Germany, and Hungary, unhesitatingly took steps to suppress and terrorise their own proletariats, washing the streets of their towns with the workers' blood. Crude force was the main means of counter-revolution, but other methods were also widely employed; the revolutionaries were depicted as tyrants, anarchists, and terrorists bringing the horrors of a new war, while the counter-revolutionaries were represented as the champions of order, freedom, democracy, and peace. The bourgeoisie manoeuvred under the masses' pressure, resorted to negotiations and demagogy, and agreed to concessions, sometimes big, sometimes small, sometimes real and sometimes illusory, so long as they lowered revolutionary tension.

At a time when the ruling circles of the developed capitalist countries were displaying a high degree of organisational capacity and

¹ Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, Vol. IV, Cassel & Co., London, 1951, p. 428.

ability to manoeuvre in a period of revolutionary crisis, the working class was demonstrating not only its strength but also its weakness. The proletariat in Europe was more numerous than in Russia. For decades it had been through the school of trade union and party training. In many countries Social-Democratic and Socialist parties were an imposing political force, while the trade unions had millions of members. When the revolutionary crisis matured, however, and the time came to join decisive battle for power, it became clear that the existing proletarian organisations were quite unprepared for it.

Given the general objective maturity of the conditions for passing from capitalism to socialism, the subjective factor became decisive, i.e. the capacity of the main social force to overturn the old social system and build a new socio-political and economic system in its place. The masses awoke to revolutionary activity everywhere, but they needed consistent, purposeful political leadership able to guide the proletariat's struggle for power, give it support against all enemies, and organise the revolutionary transformation of society and the state. Reformist labour leaders who had been concerned all their lives simply to improve living and working conditions under capitalism, and who remembered about revolution and socialism only on revolutionary holidays, could not (and did not want to) exercise such leadership.

Many of the leaders of Social-Democracy had openly passed to the side of their "own" national bourgeoisie during the war, and now exploited the authority of the workers' parties and trade unions, accumulated over the years, and the organisational levers forged in struggle, to counteract the developing or impending revolution. Others, who called themselves revolutionaries, Socialists, and democrats, who condemned direct collaboration with the bourgeoisie, proved incapable of leading mass revolutionary movements, especially when the unorganised and uneducated "lower orders" were involved in them. These leaders, scared by the masses' independent activity, did not dare to take political power by themselves. Even when power easily passed into their hands (as in Germany and Austria) they preferred to share it with bourgeois parties.

The means employed by Social-Democratic leaders in various countries to save capitalism from the revolutionary workers' onslaughts were different, and their subjective role in events was not the same. But it was from their ranks that murderous hangmen of the working class, like Noske, had come, and also the Hungarian Social-Democrats and Bavarian Independents who, yielding to panic either deliberately opted for capitulation at the decisive moment of the fighting, or betrayed the cause of the revolution. The historical responsibility for the fact that the European proletariat missed a rare, favourable chance to seize power and change the course of history lies also with

those who diverted the workers from battle by verbal tricks.

The great danger that Lenin had warned against, i.e. the absence of truly revolutionary parties in Europe capable of leading the masses to the assault on capitalism, became a truly great calamity for the working class. In the countries swept by revolutions, where the revolutionaries and reformists were soon on opposite sides of the barricades, Communist parties had to be built in the fire of battle under a hail of persecution. The birth of Communist parties in those conditions in Austria, Hungary, Poland, and Germany was in fact a very important gain of the revolutionary struggle; and their entry into the political arena marked the beginning of a new stage in the development of the labour movement of those countries. But the newly formed parties were still weak organisationally, did not have a good ideological and political training, and had not learned how to work among the masses, and how to carry the masses with them. They were only beginning this training when they joined the Communist International.

The valiant struggle of the revolutionary vanguards of the European proletariat was not, however, in vain. The whole international political situation was radically altered by the post-October revolutionary upsurge. Although the socialist revolutions did not triumph in Europe, the revolutions and revolutionary reforms in a number of countries in Central and South-East Europe were the work of the working class from beginning to end.

While not exceeding the limits of bourgeois-democratic or national-liberation revolutions, they destroyed putrefied empires, and created a number of new national states. The working class was the main driving force in this struggle. Although it had not been able to assert its supremacy fully, it had shown that it was capable of playing the leading, vanguard role in the revolutionary process.

And in those countries where the struggle did not ripen into a revolution, the working class wrested a number of substantial concessions from the bourgeoisie in both the political and the socio-economic spheres. Almost everywhere restricted franchises were swept aside, and legislative authorities and governments began to be elected on the basis of universal suffrage and a secret ballot. In most capitalist countries the workers won laws establishing an eight-hour day, and recognition of trade unions as partners in collective bargaining and the fixing of wage rates. In some countries more or less substantial concessions were wrung from the employers on pay, improvement of working conditions, social insurance, etc.

The Great October Socialist Revolution and the subsequent upsurge of revolutionary struggle played a vital role in advancing the proletariat to political power, and in developing its revolutionary self-awareness. Although the "Soviet movement" did not succeed in taking

root outside Russia, it was the prototype of the organs of revolutionary democracy which, when created by the initiative of the masses, can operate successfully in circumstances in which traditional parliamentary organisation is unable to ensure solution of urgent historical tasks.

The supreme arbiter in disputes over the roads of the proletariat's winning of power, and over its form and content, is historical practice. It has indisputably shown that social-reformists, who have more than once won strong positions in parliaments, and have headed governments, have nowhere emancipated the working people from capitalist oppression. But Soviet power, as was established in Russia and which repulsed the attacks of all enemies with the revolutionary help and support of the international proletariat, was able to transform the Land of Soviets into a powerful bastion for the future emancipation struggle of the peoples of the world.

Part II

**THE BROADENING
OF THE WORLD PROLETARIAT'S
FRONT OF STRUGGLE**

Chapter 6

DEFENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOVIETS

AGAINST INTERVENTIONISTS AND WHITEGUARDS

The Soviet people celebrated the first anniversary of the October Revolution and the establishment of Soviet government in a situation that was complicated and contradictory. "On the one hand," Lenin said, "we have never been so close to an international proletarian revolution as we are now; on the other hand, we have never been in such a perilous position as we are now." With the ending of the World War the imperialists of the Entente could be expected to intensify their attempts to aggravate the Civil War by military intervention and to overthrow the Soviet government by military intervention. "No revolution is worth anything," Lenin said in that connection, "unless it can defend itself; but," he added, "a revolution does not learn to defend itself at once." Expressing confidence that the Red Army, in which a new, socialist discipline had already taken shape, would be able to defend the gains of the October Revolution, Lenin stressed that the workers were mature enough to know the whole truth: "We have to defeat world imperialism as well as the whiteguards."¹

News of the outbreak of revolutions in Austria, Hungary, and Germany, and of the overthrow of the Hohenzollern and Hapsburg monarchies overjoyed Lenin, as Krupskaya recalled, he "was completely carried away by the news of the German revolution. He was continuously addressing meetings. His face beamed with joy.... The days of the first October anniversary were the happiest days in his life."² Lenin's forecast that the exorbitant Treaty of Brest-Litovsk would not live long was confirmed. On November 14, 1918 a decree of the Central Executive Committee was issued, signed by

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Report at a Joint Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet, Factory Committees and Trade Unions, October 22, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 123, 125; *idem*, "Resolution Adopted at a Joint Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet, Factory Committees and Trade Unions, October 22, 1918", *op. cit.*, p. 128.

² N.K. Krupskaya, *Reminiscences of Lenin*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1959, p. 489.

Lenin and Sverdlov, annulling it. "The peace of coercion and robbery," it said, "has fallen ... under the joint blows of the German and Russian proletarian revolutionaries." The Central Executive Committee, greeting the populace of the occupied regions of Russia, the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and the Caucasus, expressed its conviction that the nations emancipated from the yoke of German imperialism would not accept the oppression of Anglo-American or Japanese imperialism, and promised the labouring people full support in their fight "to establish socialist government of the workers and peasants in their lands".¹

In October 1918 a conference of the communist organisations of the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, and Finland had been held, which decided to intensify and co-ordinate the emancipation struggle in the occupied regions.

The Second Congress of the Communist Party of the Ukraine said that the fight for Soviet government necessitated "the unification of the Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Russia, for this alone can secure full freedom of national and cultural development for the Ukrainian labouring masses".² The people rose against the occupation powers. The Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of the Ukraine, which included F. A. Sergeyev (Artyom), K. E. Voroshilov, and others, announced the restoration of Soviet government on 29 November 1918. The bourgeois nationalists had set up a Ukrainian Directory in order to prevent this, and its troops, led by Petlyura, occupied Right-Bank Ukraine,³ including Kiev, with the help of the German occupation forces. As a result of the Red Army's offensive and workers' insurrections, Soviet government was consolidated in Kharkov at the beginning of 1919, and then won out over the greater part of the Ukraine.

In *Byelorussia*, where a truly people's war developed against the German occupation authorities, Soviet troops liberated Minsk in December 1918, and on 1 January 1919 Byelorussia was proclaimed a Soviet Socialist Republic (A. F. Myasnikov became chairman of its Central Executive Committee).⁴

A Provisional Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government headed by V. S. Mickevičius-Kapsukas was formed in *Lithuania* in December 1918. It published a manifesto on the creation of an

¹ *Documents of the Foreign Policy of the USSR*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1959, pp. 565-67 (in Russian).

² *The Communist Party of the Ukraine in Resolutions and Decisions of Its Congresses, Conferences, and Plenary Sessions of the Central Committee*, Vol. 1 (1918-1941), Kiev, 1976, p. 36 (in Russian).

³ "Right-Bank Ukraine" is that part of the Ukraine lying to the west of the right bank of the River Dnieper.—*Tr.*

⁴ *An Outline History of the Communist Party of Byelorussia*, Part I (1883-1920), Minsk, 1968, pp. 435-37 (in Russian).

independent Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic, which contained a programme of social and economic reforms and spoke of its aspiration "to march hand in hand with Soviet Russia". Units of the Red Army, including the 5th Vilnius Rifle Regiment raised in Moscow, took part in the liberation of Lithuania in January 1919.¹

On 23 December 1918 an edict of the Central Executive Committee signed by Lenin and Sverdlov confirmed recognition of the independence of the Soviet Republics of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estland, and emphasised that "the fact that these countries used to belong to the old tsarist Empire imposes no obligations on them", and now, on the basis of "recognition of the full freedom of self-determination and passage of power to the working class, a free, voluntary, indestructible alliance of the working people of all the nations living in the territories of the former Russian Empire is being created".²

The intricate tasks of restoring the economy and fighting domestic and foreign counter-revolution showed the Byelorussian and Lithuanian Soviet Republics the expediency of forming a union, and on 27 February 1919 a united Lithuanian-Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic was formed by unanimous resolutions of the congresses of Soviets of the two republics. V. S. Mickevičius-Kapsukas became chairman of its government. The Revolutionary Military Council of the RSFSR transferred a number of units of the Red Army to the disposition of the government of Litbel. Workers' control over enterprises was introduced, a People's Bank was founded, big and medium-sized firms were nationalised, an eight-hour day and "full social security for all working people" were introduced. While the land was nationalised, government estates (farms) were set up, instead of dividing them among the peasants with little or no land. Separation of the church from the state was proclaimed, free elementary education introduced, and Vilnius University restored.³

Soviet government, however, met with stubborn resistance from domestic and foreign reaction there. At the end of February 1919 German troops and squads of the bourgeois government launched an offensive, while Pilsudski's Polish legions invaded from the south and south-west, and took Vilnius in April. In August 1919 the last units of the Red Army were forced to withdraw from Lithuania, where a bourgeois dictatorship was set up that dealt ferociously with members of the revolutionary movement and supporters of Soviet government.⁴ Western Byelorussia was occupied by Poland. Minsk became the capital of the BSSR.

¹ *History of the Lithuanian SSR*, Vilnius, 1978, p. 318 (in Russian).

² *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1968, p. 245.

³ *History of the Lithuanian SSR*, pp. 319-25.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 328-29.

The fight against the occupation troops in *Latvia* was led by Communists, whose party was known as the Social-Democracy of Latvia. At an underground conference held in Riga in November 1918 a Military Revolutionary Committee was set up to direct preparations for an armed uprising. On 4 December a Provisional Soviet Government was formed, which included P. J. Stučka (chairman), K. A. Peterson, and J. D. Lenzman. On 3 January 1919, Ulmanis's bourgeois government was expelled by an armed uprising of Riga workers supported by the Soviet Lettish Riflemen. In February 1919 Soviet government was re-established over the whole of Latvia, except the area around Liepaja. A Congress of Soviets of Workers', Landless Peasants' and Riflemen's Deputies declared Latvia a socialist Soviet republic, and adopted a constitution. The new government confiscated the railways and big enterprises. The workers were forced to take on themselves restoration of the ruined industries which were necessary above all in order to supply the public and the army. The land was nationalised, but not transferred to the peasants, state farms being set up on former estates. An eight-hour day and social insurance were introduced, and a Latvian State University was founded.¹

The building of socialism was soon interrupted, however, by an offensive of General von der Goltz's German troops, supported by Russian whiteguards, the Baltic-German *Landeswehr*, and military formations of the Lettish bourgeoisie, with the assistance of the command of a British naval squadron. On 22 May 1919 Riga fell and the interventionists carried out a brutal pogrom, shooting between 4,500 and 7,000 persons (the estimates vary) without trial or investigation.² At the beginning of January 1920 all Latvia was in the hands of a bourgeois government. The Minister of Internal Affairs admitted later that the government had been guided by the principle "the more Communists we shoot, the more days we will remain in power".³ The Lettish Rifles, forced to withdraw, continued to battle on other fronts of the civil war.

The bourgeois government in *Estonia*, headed by the leader of the Peasant Union, K. Päts, tried to prevent revolutionary liberation of the country, but at the end of November 1918 units of the Red Army occupied Narva, and the Provisional Revolutionary Committee proclaimed the Estland Labour Commune. The Soviet of the Commune included Victor Kingisepp and others and was headed by Jaan Anvelt. By the beginning of January 1919 Soviet rule had been

¹ *The Struggle for Soviet Power in the Baltic Area*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 390, 397-401, 404-410, 416 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 335-436; See also V.J. Sipols, *Behind the Scenes of the Foreign Intervention in Latvia. 1918-1920*, Moscow, 1959, p. 130 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

established in the greater part of Estonia. As Estonian Red Army was formed, workers' control over production was introduced. Big plants were nationalised, and steps were taken to improve the workers' position, and supply the populace with food and fuel. The Soviet of the Commune and its local authorities abolished land rent, but instead of sharing out the land among the peasants with little or none, set up communes.¹

In February 1919 the armed forces of the bourgeois government, supported by the British Royal Navy and mercenaries from Finland, Sweden, and Denmark, had already taken the offensive, and soon drove the Red Army units from the Estonian territory. Otto Strandman's coalition government became an obedient tool in the hands of the Entente imperialists and the Estonian bourgeoisie. White Estonian troops took part in General Yudenich's attack on Petrograd.² The abolition of all the gains of the Estland Labour Commune was accompanied with mass terror. The uprising of the working people of the islands of Saaremaa and Muhu was brutally suppressed.

Soviet government in the Baltic states was defeated, nevertheless their working classes had had the opportunity to see from their own experience that that government was what expressed their basic interests and brought emancipation from capitalist exploitation.

As Lenin forecast, the Entente powers decided, with the ending of the World War, to step up armed intervention in Soviet Russia. Under the terms of the Compiègne Armistice with Germany of 11 November 1918, Germany was allowed to retain some of its weaponry "for the fight against Bolshevism" and to leave its troops on Soviet Russia's territory until they were replaced by Allied ones. At a conference in Jassy (Romania) and in the Entente HQ in Paris in November, representatives of France, Great Britain, the USA, and Russian whiteguard organisations worked out and specified plans for military operations in the south of Russia and the Ukraine, and for a march on Moscow jointly with the troops of Generals Krasnov and Denikin.³ Warships and transports began to arrive in Black Sea ports with troops and munitions. Landings were made in Sevastopol, Novorossiisk, Odessa, and Batumi. Reinforcements and munitions were also sent to the North, to Murmansk and Archangel.

After the severe defeats of the whiteguards in the south and east the Entente imperialists pinned their main hopes on their own armies, which were no longer obliged to fight Germany. At the same time they strove to consolidate the whiteguard forces fighting against the Soviet Government in the south, east, and north of Russia. After

¹ *History of the Estonian SSR*, Vol. 3, Tallinn, 1974, pp. 143-44, 151-64 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.* pp. 178-179.

³ *From the History of the Civil War in the USSR. A Collection of Documents and Other Materials*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1960, pp. 61-62 (in Russian).

a search for a "leader" who could unite them, the choice fell on Admiral Kolchak. On 18 November 1918 a military coup was carried out in Omsk, and Kolchak proclaimed himself "supreme ruler of Russia". Denikin, who commanded the counter-revolutionary troops in the South, became his deputy, while General Miller soon headed the "Government of the Northern Region".

The Soviet Government repeatedly demanded that the Western countries cease their intervention and their support of the counter-revolutionary insurgents, and exploited every occasion to publicly proclaim its desire for peace and readiness to come to an understanding for the sake of it. The Sixth All-Russia Extraordinary Congress of Soviets on 6 November 1918, for instance, declared to the governments of the United States of America, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, who were waging war against Russia, that "the Congress proposes the opening of peace negotiations in order to avoid bloodshed".¹ Around a year later Lenin said, in reply to questions of a US correspondent: "We are decidedly for an economic understanding with America—with all countries but *especially* with America".² In February 1920 Lenin reaffirmed that Soviet Russia was ready to enter into business relations with all countries. Its plans in Asia were the same as in Europe: "peaceful coexistence with all peoples".³ But all the Soviet Government's proposals, appeals, and demands remained unanswered.

Western historians depict the Soviet system and the Bolsheviks, against all the known facts, as guilty of the three-year civil war. They gloss over, or totally deny, the role of the imperialist powers in inciting it and minimise the scale of their aid to the whiteguards.⁴ In fact it was the ruling circles of the Western powers who organised the military intervention that were the chief culprits dragging out the civil war.

While the working class, led by the Communist Party, and rallying all the working people around it, defended the Soviet system and the gains of the socialist revolution, the bourgeoisie and the landlords, relying on the forces of international imperialism, strove to restore the capitalist system in Russia. Between these two poles were the millions of the petty bourgeoisie, above all the peasantry. The outcome of the struggle depended, to a decisive degree, on whose stand

¹ *Documents of the Foreign Policy of the USSR*, Vol. 1, p. 556.

² V.I. Lenin, "Answers to Questions Put by a *Chicago Daily News* Correspondent", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 51.

³ V.I. Lenin, "In Reply to Questions Put by Karl Wiegand, Berlin Correspondent of Universal Service", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 365.

⁴ John Bradley, *Allied Intervention in Russia*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1968; R. Ullman, *Britain and the Russian Civil War. November 1918-February 1920*, Vol. 2, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1968.

and for whom the peasantry opted. Lenin and the Bolsheviks always reckoned with the inevitable vacillations of these masses between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, vacillations governed by deep-seated social causes: the dual nature of the petty bourgeoisie, whose position as working people drew them to the side of the proletariat, but whose position as property owners drew them to the bourgeoisie. In the first year of Soviet rule, therefore, the Party, relying firmly on the peasant poor, struggled to draw the middle peasants to its side, trying to get them, at least, not to support the enemies of the revolution. "Neutralisation" of the middle strata, the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry, Lenin explained, "will develop from conviction, example, learning from experience, forcible curbing of deviations, etc."¹

The poor were raised to the position of the middle peasantry through implementation of the Soviet Government's agrarian policy. Middle peasants became the majority among the peasantry; their position was all the more important because they provided the biggest contingent of those conscripted into the Red Army. The latter's fighting capacity and cohesion increasingly depended on the mutual relations of the working class and middle peasantry. The fighting capacity of the whiteguard armies, too, which also resorted to mobilisation, depended on the peasants' stand.

In the autumn of 1918 the middle peasantry, the main social stratum giving "the petty-bourgeois democrats an economic basis",² began to swing to the side of the Soviet government. This found reflection in an open letter of Pitirim Sorokin, the sociologist, right-wing Socialist-Revolutionary and member of the Constituent Assembly, who admitted the error of the position of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. Lenin saw in this an indication that "at a given moment we can count on at least a neutral attitude to the Soviet government from a whole number of groups now antagonistic".³

When analysing the causes and meaning of this change of attitude, Lenin pointed out that it was linked, firstly, with the revolution in Germany and also with the collapse of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk which had repelled considerable sections of the petty bourgeoisie, who were now becoming convinced of the correctness of the Bolshevik policy. Secondly, Anglo-French and American imperialism, which "the fantasy of the petty-bourgeois democrats had pictured as a friend of democracy and a protector of the oppressed",⁴ had turned

¹ V.I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 39, 5th Russian Edition, p. 456.

² V.I. Lenin, "Moscow Party Workers' Meeting, November 27, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 201.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Speech at a Rally in Lenin's Honour, November 20, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 183.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "The Valuable Admissions of Pitirim Sorokin", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 187.

out in fact to be stranglers of the independence and freedom of nations no less than German imperialism. By stepping up intervention in Russia they took on the role of butcher and gendarme as regards its freedom and independence. Therefore, said Lenin, history had "veered round to bring patriotism back towards us now", and brought the petty bourgeoisie closer to Soviet government.¹ Thirdly, the naive faith of petty-bourgeois democrats in the Constituent Assembly and in democracy "in general", and in a naive counterposing of "pure democracy" to proletarian dictatorship, was collapsing. What the "Constituents" had themselves experienced in Archangel and Samara, in Siberia, and in the south, where the military-monarchist circles did not take them seriously, could not help shaking their firmest prejudices.² The course of world events and the Russian monarchists' alliance with Anglo-French and American imperialism had demonstrated that in reality there was only one alternative: either Soviet government or reaction, i.e., either frankly monarchist reaction, or reaction masked in the forms of bourgeois democracy.³

While a resolute struggle against the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks had been inevitable in the initial period of the revolution, when they had gone over to the enemy, Lenin considered that now, when the millions were changing course, it was not enough just to meet those turning to the Soviets in a friendly spirit; the politician had to learn "to *bring about* this change of front among the various sections and groups of the broad mass of petty-bourgeois democrats", as soon as it historically matured. The slogan "ruthless struggle" had been correct when the intermediate strata were wavering toward the enemy, but with the masses' turn toward the Soviet regime, "our slogan must be one of *agreement*, of establishing good-neighbourly relations".⁴

"...The middle peasant is not our enemy," Lenin wrote, "he wavered, is wavering, and will continue to waver". To affect the waverers, however, one had to act differently than when fighting an active enemy. In that connection Lenin formulated the new task very clearly: "The task at the present moment is to come to an agreement with the middle peasant—while not for a moment renouncing the struggle against the kulak and at the same time firmly relying solely on the poor peasant—for a turn in our direction on the part of the middle peasants is now inevitable." This task, incidentally, did not con-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Moscow Party Workers' Meeting, November 27, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 209.

² For fuller details see G.Z. Ioffe, *The Collapse of the Russian Monarchist Counter-Revolution*, Moscow, 1977 (in Russian).

³ V.I. Lenin, "The Valuable Admissions of Pitirim Sorokin", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, pp. 189-90.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Moscow Party Workers' Meeting, November 27, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 211.

cern just the village but also the town, not just the middle peasantry but also "the handicraftsman, the artisan, and the worker whose conditions are most petty-bourgeois or whose views are most petty-bourgeois, and to many office workers and army officers, and, in particular, to the intellectuals generally".¹

The Eighth Congress of the RCP(B) held in March 1919 played a major role both in developing and consolidating the *policy of an alliance of the working class and middle peasantry*, and in dealing with a number of other issues vital for the Soviet Republic. In his report on work in the village Lenin stressed that it was necessary to "decide the question of the middle peasants in its totality".² While noting that the waverings of this millions-strong section of the working people were transitory, he emphasised that it was impossible, in any case, to alter their socio-economic position by force or coercion. "All the class-conscious workers—from Petrograd, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, or Moscow—who have been to the rural districts related examples of how a number of misunderstandings which appeared to be irremovable, and a number of conflicts which appeared to be very serious, were removed or mitigated when intelligent working men came forward and spoke, not in the bookish language, but in a language understood by the peasants, when they spoke ... as comrades, explaining the situation and appealing to their sentiments as working people against the exploiters. And by such comradely explanation they accomplished what could not be accomplished by hundreds of others who conducted themselves like commanders and superiors."³ The Congress proposed going over from a policy of neutralising the middle peasant to one of a firm alliance of the working class and the middle peasantry, with reliance on the poor, for the fight against the kulaks in the interests of building socialism. This orientation was not immediately understood locally, but after heated discussions it became clear that it was the only true road to rallying the immense majority around the working class, and to creating a superiority of the revolutionary forces over the enemy.

As for petty-bourgeois democracy, Lenin noted a new wave of vacillation in it connected with the food situation and the dragging on of the civil war. Flexible, cautious tactics and a partial change in the line of conduct were called for, he said. When, for instance, the leaders of the Menshevik and right Socialist-Revolutionary parties announced their repudiation of participation in armed struggle against the Soviet government, the Central Executive Committee

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Valuable Admissions of Pitirim Sorokin", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 191.

² V.I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 201.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

rescinded its edicts excluding them from Soviets.¹ But as for their members and press organs that supported Kolchak, suppressive measures were taken against them. "We have already succeeded in bringing about a thorough change of attitude among the vacillating intellectuals," Lenin said. "Yesterday we were talking about legalising the petty-bourgeois parties, but today we are arresting the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries; but in this switching back and forth we are applying a very definite system. A consistent and very firm line runs through these changes of policy, namely, to cut off counter-revolution and to utilise the cultural apparatus of the bourgeoisie."²

That was a further development of Lenin's idea of the approach to petty-bourgeois democracy. Passing from open struggle against it, because of its swing to counter-revolution, to a policy of *agreement* with it (on the basis of its withdrawal from struggle against Soviet government) left the need for a decisive ideological and organisational *demarcation* fully in force, but at the same time opened up a prospect, in certain conditions, of establishing an *alliance* to tackle various tasks, especially that of the socialist transformation of society. Given continuing civil war it was impossible to expect more. History had raised no few obstacles on this road.

Lenin divided the opponents of Soviet government into two groups: "both ... defend capitalism against socialism. One of them acts brutally and with the crudest selfishness; this is the group of landowners, capitalists, kulaks, Denikins, Kolchaks, Black Hundreds and Constitutional-Democrats. The other group defends capitalism 'ideologically', that is, unselfishly, without any direct, personal profit, but out of prejudice and cowardice in face of the new; this is the group of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. These are the last 'ideological' advocates of capitalism".³

At the end of 1918 and beginning of 1919 the interventionists launched an offensive in the South; British troops occupied Batumi and Baku, French troops Odessa, Kherson, and Nikolayev. A guerrilla movement developed in their rear, however, and underground Communists carried on great agitational work among the occupation troops. The Red Army's successful counter-offensive and demoralisation of the interventionist troops forced France to begin evacuating them. But though the Entente powers had failed when acting with their own forces, they intensively continued to arm and supply the armies of the Russian whiteguards.

¹ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. 4, pp. 96, 436-437.

² V.I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 181.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Freedom to Trade in Grain", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 569.

A new stage set in in the spring of 1919 when the main role in overthrowing the Soviet regime fell to the armies of internal counter-revolution. Under the guidance of the Entente the joint forces of interventionists and whiteguards took the offensive: from the east Kolchak's army; from the south Denikin's army; against Petrograd, Yudenich's army; and from the north Miller's army. Armed forces of the Entente powers, troops of bourgeois-landlord Poland, Finland, Estonia, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Greece also took part in the campaign. The Entente's military committee estimated the total of the anti-Soviet armed forces at above 1,300,000 (310,000 officers and men from Britain, France, and the USA, more than 600,000 from the small countries, and around 370,000 whiteguards).¹ The main shock force was Kolchak's big army, which was advised by the French General Maurice Janin, and was supplied and equipped by the British General Alfred Knox.

The Soviet troops, inferior in numbers and equipment to the enemy, and forced to parry blows in all directions, retreated. In May 1919 Kolchak's army reached the Volga, threatening the central areas and Moscow itself. Immense efforts were required of all the Soviet forces, especially of the working class, to contain the enemy. Hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants joined the Red Army. Communists cemented its ranks. The workers in the rear increased production of weapons and munitions. As a result Kolchak's troops were driven back behind the Urals in the summer. The whiteguards were defeated at Petrograd as well. And the Entente powers were forced to begin evacuating their troops from Archangel and Murmansk.

In the summer and autumn of 1919 a mortal danger again hung over the Soviet Republic, this time in the south, from Denikin's army. The new offensive planned by the Entente was also a combined one. Whiteguard formations moved from the north in support of Denikin's army, which had begun a march on Moscow. Yudenich renewed operations against Petrograd, while the troops of Poland and other countries attacked from the west. Winston Churchill, the British Minister of War, loudly announced that 14 countries were involved in the operations against the Soviet Republic. Britain alone sent Denikin 250,000 rifles, 200 guns, 30 tanks, and much ammunition. The British military mission with him numbered around 2,000. His advisers were the British Generals Briggs and Holman, the French General Mangin, and the American Admiral McKelly.² In the autumn his army, having occupied the south of Russia and the Ukraine, was approaching Tula. Fighting was going on at Petrograd against

¹ *History of the USSR*, Vol. 7, Moscow, 1967, pp. 497-98 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 525.

Yudenich's army; and in Turkestan against the remnants of Kolchak's force. In the area that remained Soviet the counter-revolution organised mutinies and sabotage, and murdered Party and local government workers.

The Communist Party concentrated its main forces against the main danger, and appealed to the workers and peasants: "Everything for the Fight against Denikin!" At the beginning of October around 40 per cent of all the Communists and over 55 per cent of the political workers of the Red Army on active service were concentrated on the Southern Front; workers made up 15 to 17 per cent of the personnel, and Communists around 13 per cent.¹ The Red Army, supported by all the working people, and conscious of the justice of its fight, soon surpassed the counter-revolutionary army in both numbers and fighting capacity. In the autumn it went over to the counter-offensive. Guerrillas operated in the enemy's rear in the Ukraine, on the Don, and in the North Caucasus. Denikin's army ceased to exist early in 1920.

The imperialists, however, did not abandon their object of destroying the Soviet Republic. The Soviet Government, which had made more than 50 peace proposals in five months to the governments of capitalist countries, agreed in its striving to prolong the peaceful breathing space, to cede more Eastern territory to Poland than even the Entente had proposed. Nevertheless Pilsudski's army, having been reorganised, and armed and supplied by France and Great Britain, mounted an offensive on Kiev together with the Petlyura gangs.² Later, General Wrangel's army, which was entrenched in the Crimea, also developed active operations.

It took all the country's forces to repulse the imperialists' new campaign. The Soviet Government issued a manifesto "To All the Workers, Peasants, and Honest Citizens of Russia". While calling for a fight to the death, the Party at the same time counteracted the chauvinistic anti-Polish feelings that had become particularly strong during the Red Army's counter-offensive against Warsaw. In the autumn of 1920 the invading Polish troops were thrown back, and an armistice was signed in Riga. Wrangel's troops were defeated in November and the Crimea liberated. Soon Transcaucasia, too, became Soviet.

The work of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government to mobilise all forces and means to defeat their enemies, which was gigantic both in scale and difficulty, was led by Lenin, who was the head of the Workers' and Peasants' Defence Council set up by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on 30 November 1918.

¹ *History of the USSR*, Vol. 7, p. 535.

² *From the History of the Civil War in the USSR*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1961, p. 134 (in Russian).

He was also involved in planning and carrying out the Red Army's vital military operations. Over three years he wrote more than 600 letters and telegrams on defence matters, military dispositions, and the conduct of military operations.¹

At the end of 1920 the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army numbered 5,500,000 men.² Workers constituted its core, drawn into it not only by general conscription but also at the call of the trade unions, and Party and Komsomol (Young Communist League) organisations. Its strength was its close links with the advanced workers of Petrograd, Moscow, Tula, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, and other industrial centres. "How did we act in the more critical moments of the Civil War?" Lenin recalled later. "We concentrated our best Party forces in the Red Army; we mobilised the best of our workers; we looked for new forces at the deepest roots of our dictatorship."³

The Communist Party sent almost half of its members (the bulk of them workers) into the Red Army.⁴ A rough estimate is that around 940,000 workers (half of them industrial workers) joined the Red Army.⁵ The proportion of workers in the armed forces was much higher than in the population in general. "The Russian proletariat succeeded in rallying and knitting together scattered forces and in creating a united and stalwart Red Army."⁶ The concentration of workers was particularly high in units fighting on decisive sectors. The proportion of workers among the troops at the front and in front-line areas was 16.5 to 21 per cent.⁷

Political commissars played a major role in building and consolidating the armed forces of the proletarian state; they exercised political leadership of the armies and control over the commanders, up to 6 per cent of whom at the end of the civil war were former career officers and up to 28 per cent former wartime officers.⁸ The political commissars were appointed from among the best politically trained Communists, and most of them were experienced workers. The Central Committee of the RCP(B) reminded political commissars in the summer of 1919 that "the working class and, consequently, its po-

¹ Yu. I. Korablyov, *V.I. Lenin and Defence of the Gains of the October Revolution*, Moscow, 1979, p. 531 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 529.

³ V.I. Lenin, "How We Should Reorganise the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 481.

⁴ *History of the CPSU*, Vol. 3, Book 2, Moscow, 1968, p. 561 (in Russian).

⁵ E.G. Gimpelson, *The Soviet Working Class. 1918-1920. Socio-Political Changes*, Moscow, 1974, p. 37 (in Russian).

⁶ V.I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at the Third All-Russia Congress of Textile Workers, April 19, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 523.

⁷ *Byulleten TsSU*, No. 59, 1922, p. 6.

⁸ V. Antonov-Ovseyenko, *The Building of the Red Army in the Revolution*, Moscow, 1923, p. 31 (in Russian).

litical representatives in the army—the military commissars—are the authority in the Red Army”.¹

During the civil war more than 20,000 worker-commanders trained in military command courses joined the Red Army.² Tens of thousands of workers became commanders, acquiring the experience and skills of military leadership directly in the field. The working class threw up many talented generals: V. K. Blyukher, a fitter from the Mytishchi Railway Car Works; M. V. Frunze, an Ivanovo-Voznesensk worker; and K. E. Voroshilov, a Lugansk fitter, began by commanding separate detachments and units and became outstanding military leaders. P. P. Postyshev, the son of an Ivanovo-Voznesensk worker, A. Ya. Parkhomenko, a worker from the Lugansk Locomotive Works, and A. M. Cheverev, a Urals worker, showed themselves to be bold, talented commanders.

Frunze, evaluating the role of worker-commanders, recalled that “the entry of proletarian elements and red commanders into the Red Army was reflected in the way our operations were conducted, and when one recalls some of our operations and their frequent cases of differences between the red command and the specialists, we see that the red commanding staff introduced boldness, initiative, and resoluteness into the army”.³ Worker Red Army men gave examples of staunchness and self-sacrifice that encouraged the peasant Red Army men to follow them. History had never before known such mass military heroism. Nearly 15,000 Red Army men, commanders, and political workers were awarded the highest military decoration, the Order of the Red Banner.

Workers showed themselves no less devoted to the revolution on the labour front. Half-starved and half-naked, working on outworn equipment, with a chronic shortage of fuel, raw and other materials, they provided the armed forces with everything they needed. On 8 November 1919 the Revolutionary Military Council of the 7th Army telegraphed to Lenin: “Red troops fighting on the Petrograd front want to convey this message: ‘We are made, shod, clothed, armed, fed, and mounted by Petrograd workers. The dedicated, very strenuous effort of the workers of the Putilov, Okhta, Izhora, and Kolpino works had given us armoured trains, armoured cars, tanks, guns, and machine-guns. By their revolutionary enthusiasm they inspire us with an indomitable will for final victory’”.⁴

During the civil war international units continued to join the

¹ *From the History of the Civil War in the USSR*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1961, p. 795 (in Russian).

² E.G. Gimpelson, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

³ M.V. Frunze, *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1977, p. 79 (in Russian).

⁴ *Krasny arkhiv*, No. 3 (94), 1939, p. 31.

Red Army and take an active part in the fighting. Their ranks numbered several hundred thousand. When a grave situation developed near Perm at the end of 1918 an International Communist Battalion was sent there from Moscow, made up of Hungarians (Commander Béla Jaross, and Béla Kun), Germans, Czechs, Romanians, and Serbs. A Chinese regiment commanded by Jeng Fucheng (who died heroically), Korean companies, and Estonian and Finnish battalions fought alongside the Urals workers. Chapayev's army group included the 1st Moscow Wienerman International Communist Regiment, named after Laszlo Wienerman, who had been killed in battle and was buried on Red Square in Moscow.¹

Hungarians (including Máté Zalka and Ferenc Munnich), Germans, Austrians, Italians, Czechs, Slovaks, Bulgarians, Romanians, Poles, Yugoslavs, Chinese, Koreans and Turks fought in the ranks of the Red Army and in the guerrilla armies of N. A. Kalandarashvili, A. D. Kravchenko, and others, fighting against Kolchak in Siberia.² In the 5th Army that liberated Krasnoyarsk there were also several Frenchmen, a Scot, and a Black soldier. The international detachments, composed in the main of Hungarians and Germans, began to unite in the Third International International Division in early February 1920; the division also included Russians, and Ukrainians, Letts, Lithuanians. Its 1st Regiment was assigned to guard the "gold train" captured from Kolchak.³

Several big units of internationalists, composed of ex-POWs and of migrants from Iran and Sinkiang, numbering more than 2,500 fighters, operated on the Turkestan Front in the spring of 1919. In the autumn a 2nd (Karl Liebknecht) International Regiment was formed, which was commanded by the Czech E. F. Kuželo. In 1920 an Iranian International Detachment was formed (from Iranians and Turks).⁴ The 1st Poltava International Regiment, consisting mainly of Hungarians and Romanians, operated on the Southern Front under the command of Jozef Fekete, a Hungarian, with T. Diamandescu, a Romanian, as military commissar. This regiment soon merged with the 1st International Rifle Brigade, raised in Kiev by the Czech S. Czastek.⁵ The Serb Oleko Dundić became a famous hero of the First Mounted Army. Another Serb, D. Serdić, took part in

¹ *Internationalists. Working People from Other Countries Who Participated in the Struggle for Soviet Power*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 361, 364-65, 588 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 370-71.

³ *Internationalists. Working People from Other Countries Who Participated in the Struggle for Soviet Power in the Republic's South and East*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 139-41 (in Russian).

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 193, 198, 202-205.

⁵ *Internationalists...*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 430-33.

the storming of the Winter Palace and later became an outstanding Red Army commander.¹

The moral and political superiority of the Red Armymen, full of revolutionary enthusiasm and united by class solidarity, was decisive for victory over the enemy. The Party of Communists was the soul and organiser of their success. "It was only because of the Party's vigilance and its strict discipline," Lenin said after the end of the civil war, "because the authority of the Party united all government departments and institutions, because the slogans issued by the Central Committee were adopted by tens, hundreds, thousands and finally millions of people as one man, because incredible sacrifices were made—it was only because of all this that the miracle which occurred was made possible. It was only because of all this that we were able to win in spite of the campaigns of the imperialists of the Entente and of the whole world having been repeated twice, thrice and even four times".²

The building of a powerful Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, in which the working class had the decisive role, evoked vicious attacks by all the opponents of the Soviet regime. Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries hypocritically declared: "Look, instead of socialism they have given you red militarism!", a claim that was immediately taken up in bourgeois propaganda. In fact it was the first display of the myth of the "Soviet threat"—one that has camouflaged the imperialist policy of preparing aggression against socialism from that time to the present. Lenin wrote, exposing its falsity: "The imperialists of the whole world hurled themselves upon the Russian Republic in order to crush it, and we began to form an army which for the first time in history knows what it is fighting for and what it is making sacrifices for, which is successfully contending against a numerically superior enemy... This is denounced as red militarism!"³ The experience of military defence of the Soviet Republic in 1918-1920 showed that a proletarian state has to build armed forces that can repulse all attacks by internal and outside imperialist counter-revolution.

WAR COMMUNISM

The imperialist powers' intervention and the three-year civil war called for immense material resources. This made the extremely serious economic situation of the Soviet land even worse. Colossal

¹ *Internationalists...*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 399-403.

² V.I. Lenin, "Ninth Congress of the R.C.P.(B)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 446.

³ V.I. Lenin, "The Achievements and Difficulties of the Soviet Government", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 66.

losses were imposed on it. The Red Army lost nearly one million men; the material losses were estimated at 39,000 million gold roubles.¹ The Republic's most important economic regions were occupied, and the intervention deprived it for a long time of raw materials, fossil fuels, and food. Foreign trade virtually ceased because of the economic blockade. The civil war rolled back and forth in various directions over a vast area, which inflicted incredible damage on industry, transport, and peasant farming.

The terrible consequences of the war, collapse of business, and famine primarily affected the urban population, above all the working class, which bore the greatest sacrifices. Its numbers fell steeply because of frequent calling up for the front and food campaigns, for the drive against gangsterism and to restore transport, and in connection with the flight from hunger to the countryside. In the autumn of 1918, 38 per cent of the factories were idle.² Industrial output continued to fall in 1919, and in 1920 was one-seventh of the prewar level (pig iron 2.4 per cent; railway freight traffic 23 per cent).³ At the same time the front continued to get priority for what scanty resources there were.

By the end of 1920 only 1,500,000 workers were employed in industry, or half the number in 1913. The textile and food industries lost particularly many workers (72.7 and 69.5 per cent respectively). Metal working industry, working intensively for the front, suffered smaller losses, but for all that the number of its workers fell by 21.3 per cent.⁴ The fall in numbers of workers was heaviest in large-scale industry. The proportion of workers employed in plants with 1,000 or more employees halved, while the proportion of workers in small enterprises doubled. The social composition of the working class continued to change; it was replenished by women who had never worked before, and its ranks were also filled by people coming from intermediate strata of the population. The number of experienced, skilled workers was hardly 40 per cent of the labour force at the end of 1920.⁵

The position of industrial workers was extremely hard. They suffered above all from malnutrition, and at times from terrible hunger.

¹ *History of the Civil War in the USSR*, Vol. 5, Moscow, 1960, p. 370; *Documents of the Foreign Policy of the USSR*, Vol. 5, Moscow, 1961, p. 295 (both in Russian).

² *Trudy TsSU*, (Publications of the Central Statistical Administration), Vol. 26, Issue 1-2, Moscow, 1926, p. 29 (in Russian).

³ S.G. Strumilin, *Essays in the Economic History of Russia and the USSR*, Moscow, 1966, p. 490; *Industry for the Ten Years 1917-1927*, Moscow, 1927, p. 4 (both in Russian).

⁴ E.G. Gimpelson, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

⁵ O.I. Shkaratan, *Problems of the Social Structure of the USSR Working Class. Historical and Sociological Studies*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 254, 271-72 (in Russian).

They did not regularly receive even the miserable food rations they were entitled to by their ration cards, and not always in full. In Petrograd, at the end of 1918 there was no bread at all. There were days when oats were issued instead of bread. In the spring of 1919 the textile workers of the Moscow industrial area received a ration containing only 15 to 25 per cent of the calories needed to sustain working capacity.¹

Malnutrition and physical emaciation caused a spread of diseases. Many areas were swept by epidemics of typhus, and there were outbreaks of cholera, smallpox, and other diseases that affected hundreds of thousands of workers and their families. Living conditions were incredibly hard. The redistribution of housing was able to improve the situation of only a relatively small proportion of the workers, and in the war conditions it was impossible to build new housing or repair old houses. The housing stock shrank. Even in the big towns most houses did not have electricity because the power stations were working irregularly and mainly supplied factories. Flats were lit by smoky home-made lamps ("winkers" and "mouse eyes"). But the cold was particularly torturing. Housing was heated by home-made iron stoves. When there was no firewood fences, furniture, anything that came to hand, were burned.

In the first years of its political supremacy, Lenin said, the working class "suffered distress, want, starvation and a worsening of economic positions such as no other class in history had suffered". It bore the heaviest sacrifices in the fight for power and to overthrow the dominion of the exploiters, and having become "the dictator" and exercising its class domination with the greatest firmness and "grim determination", had voluntarily taken on its shoulders, as well, the heavy burden of responsibility for the fate of the nation.²

During those fiery years, the proletariat's Party continually sought and found ways out of a position that threatened time and again to become catastrophic. It restructured the country's life on a war footing within a ring of mobile fronts that was now tightening and now slightly loosened. The Workers' and Peasants' Defence Council, headed by Lenin, and the state machinery did their utmost to provide flexible, operative, and efficient leadership of both rear and the front. Management of the economy became more and more centralised.

The logic of the class struggle made it necessary to speed up the attack on the bourgeoisie's remaining economic positions so as to deprive it of the material opportunities to continue its fight against the people, and so as to concentrate all resources in the hands of the

¹ *Ekonomicheskaya zhizn*, 6 June 1919.

² V.I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at the All-Russia Congress of Transport Workers, March 27, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 274.

government, in the interests of the working people. The Soviet state was forced to use emergency proletarian methods to cope with the urgent tasks facing it, above all as concerned the provision of food, because famine threatened to strangle the socialist revolution.

The operations of the workers' food squads, which were soon united in a single Food Requisitioning Army of the RSFSR People's Commissariat for Food, saved the urban population from death. Stocks of grain were purchased at a fixed price, or requisitioned from kulak saboteurs. But money was depreciated; industrial goods were needed to compensate the peasants. In order to concentrate all the few reserves of the manufacture of cloth, shoes, etc., in its hands, the government nationalised wholesale warehouses and firms, and banned private trade in the most important industrial goods. Despite those measures, however, it did not manage, because of the fall in production, to get enough reserves of goods to exchange for grain. On 11 January 1919 the Council of People's Commissars was forced to issue a decree (based on experience in the Tula, Vyatka, Kaluga, and other provinces) on a *surplus-grain appropriation system* that obliged peasants to hand over surplus grain and fodder even without compensation (for depreciated money).¹

This system was based on the military and political alliance of the working class and peasantry built up and consolidated in the fight against foreign intervention and the whiteguards. Most of the peasants, realising that the Red Army could not defend the gains of the revolution without food and fodder, voluntarily met their obligations under the appropriation system, challenging as they were. The peasants had received land from the proletarian state, and defence against the landowners and kulaks. The workers were receiving food from the peasants as a loan, as it were, until industry was restored. At the same time the surplus-grain appropriation system made it possible to undermine the economic position of the kulaks, who were exploiting famine for profiteering. Lenin said later: "...We could hold out—in a besieged fortress—only through the surplus-grain appropriation system, that is, by taking from the peasant whatever surplus produce was available, and sometimes even a part of his necessities, in order to keep the army in fighting trim and to prevent industry from going to pieces altogether".²

The working class directly ensured success of the surplus appropriation system, which covered potatoes, meat, and other foods as well as bread and fodder grains. Procurements rose: in 1918/19 a total of 108 million poods of grain was collected, 212 million poods

¹ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. 4, pp. 292-94 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "Report on the Tax in Kind Delivered at a Meeting of Secretaries and Responsible Representatives of R.C.P.(B) Cells of Moscow and Moscow Gubernia, April 9, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, 1973, p. 289.

in 1919/20, and 367 million poods in 1920/21.¹ The Food Army not only collected food under the surplus system, but also helped the peasants with the harvest and repair of implements, and carried on much propaganda and agitation. In addition, the Party organisations of the towns, the trade unions, and factories and workshops established direct links with the local rural authorities. During the sowing and harvesting, trade union and Party organisations in industrial centres sent squads of workers to the rural areas to give direct aid and carry on explanatory work. In 1920 a Peasant Week was held—workers mended peasants' farm implements, and repaired their houses, mills, etc., gratis. According to incomplete returns 132,300 workers went out to the country in that Week to 116 uyezds (counties) out of 254 in 23 provinces of the RSFSR.² The peasants saw with their own eyes that the working class was doing everything it could to help their farming, not just by government policy but also by personal involvement, which helped consolidate the alliance of workers and peasants. As Lenin frankly explained subsequently to foreign Communists: "The food policy pursued by Soviet Russia... was undoubtedly very crude and imperfect, and gave rise to many abuses. A number of mistakes were made in its implementation. But as a whole, it was the only possible policy under the conditions prevailing at the time. And it did fulfil its historic mission: it saved the proletarian dictatorship in a ruined and backward country."³

To begin with, it had not been intended to push nationalisation of medium-sized enterprises, and it had been considered that small-scale private industry would be retained for a long time. But the war situation made it necessary to amend those plans. The vast scale of the war called for exploitation of all available possibilities for the needs of war production, which was impossible while a considerable part of industry still remained privately owned; the owners of many plants did not want to work on orders from the Soviet authorities, and concealed primary products, fuel, and materials. It became necessary to carry nationalisation further, and then to speed it up. In 1919 almost all medium-sized enterprises were nationalised, and in 1920 some small-scale industry too. By taking over enterprises and organising central administration, the state got the chance to distribute limited resources effectively, concentrating raw materials, fuel, and labour where the interests of defence required them.

In its first days the Soviet government proclaimed: "He who does

¹ *History of the CPSU*, Vol. 3, Book 2, pp. 313, 496.

² P. N. Morozov, "The Organisation of Mass Political Work During the Civil War (1919-1920)". In: *Transactions of the Moscow N.K. Krupskaya Regional Pedagogical Institute*, Vol. 95, Moscow, 1961, p. 239 (in Russian).

³ V.I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32. p. 458.

not work, neither shall he eat", a principle that stemmed from the very essence of the social system, whose aim was to abolish the conditions in which one person could live on the labour of another. Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People envisaged that "universal labour conscription shall be introduced so as to eliminate the parasitic sections of society and organise the economy".¹ In practice conscription affected the exploiter elements, since the workers, peasants, and other working people had always had to work for their means of subsistence. On 5 October 1918 the Council of People's Commissars issued an edict instituting compulsory labour for those who did not work.²

The civil war caused a steep reduction of labour resources. There was a great shortage of hands in the economy. The Soviet state could not draw working people into production by economic means alone, because it did not have the means for it. It had to resort to militarisation of the enterprises and whole industries most vital for defence; employees could not quit their jobs of their own free will. Labour conscription was resorted to for industry, road and farm work, the procurement of fuel, etc. The militarisation of labour was a temporary, forced measure dictated by the exceptional difficulties of wartime. The Communist Party did not consider it a "normal" method of economic organisation, and the 9th Congress of the RCP(B) rejected Trotsky's claim that militarisation should be employed throughout the whole period of building the new society as the universal means of organising the working class and peasantry.

Even in the circumstances of the civil war such methods of coercion could only be employed successfully because the broad masses of the people understood the need for them. Their use was always combined with immense explanatory work by the Communist Party because this policy was based on the firm, implicit convictions of the very broad masses and their conscious attitude to the war.³ The measures adopted not only gave industry the necessary minimum of labour power but also helped save many workers from becoming declassed and losing their skills.

The war called for immense financial resources. The Soviet Government's expenditure considerably exceeded its income. In 1920 the budget deficit was 86.9 per cent of the total expenditure.⁴ The sums lacking were covered by the emission of paper money. Since produc-

¹ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1957, p. 322 (in Russian).

² *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1964, pp. 396-397 (in Russian).

³ V.I. Lenin, "The Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, December 23-29, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 498.

⁴ *On the New Paths: Results of the New Economic Policy 1921-1922*, Issue No. 2, Moscow, 1923, p. 2 (in Russian).

tion of consumer goods had declined, and the lack of necessities was growing, the purchasing power of the rouble fell rapidly. Employees could buy very little on the market with their wages and salaries, and no rise in them could keep pace with the growth of market prices. By the end of 1920 the cash wages of, for example, Moscow workers had increased 400-fold compared with 1913, but the prices of consumer goods had risen 20,000 times over.¹

In its search for a way out of the situation the Communist Party took the road of promoting the subsistence economy (i.e., product exchange or barter; issue of food and prime necessities to employees as part of their wages). The Party Central Committee said in a circular to provincial committees in the summer of 1920: "The food crisis in the major worker centres and the impossibility of easing it by increasing wages makes it necessary to go over to supplying the working population with food entirely from state reserves".² At the end of 1920 the government issued a series of decrees on the free supply of food, consumer goods, and communal services to employees and their families. The development of the subsistence economy became widespread, and gave many people the idea that money "was dying out". The tendency to equalise pay was strengthened. The depreciation of money killed the significance of wage differentials; real wages were determined more and more by the part received in kind. A feature of this type of supply, moreover, was its class principle; it had no connection, in fact, with work done or productivity. Since the primary obligation of Soviet government was care for the workers—the main productive force of society—they had to be supplied with at least the minimum of food necessary to keep up their physical strength. Rations in kind were therefore the same within each category (most for workers, less for office staff, less still for members of their families). In 1920 the food ration in Moscow for a worker employed on the heaviest work was a total of 17 lbs of bread with additives a month, plus 1/2 lb of meat or fish, 3/4 lb of sugar, less than a pound of salt, and a box of matches.³ A resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Economic Council of 11 July 1921 (edited by Lenin) said that "in a besieged fortress... there was a perfectly understandable ... *tendency to supply, feed and maintain everyone as equally as possible; while there was no chance of starting on the restoration of production*". Equalisation was a consequence of the "war period of our revolution" when the republic was "a war camp".⁴

¹ *Bulleten statistiki truda Moskovskoi gubernii*, No. 5-6, 1921, Moscow p. 6.

² *Izvestia TsK RKP(b)*, 4 September 1920.

³ *History of the CPSU*, Vol. 3, Book 2, p. 495.

⁴ *Lenin Miscellany XX*, Moscow, 1932, p. 103 (in Russian).

All these features of the Soviet economy during the civil war (the surplus appropriation system; the concentration of almost all industrial production and distribution in the hands of the state; the banning of private trade; payment of wages in kind; equalisation of distribution; militarisation of labour; and intensive centralisation of administration) constituted a gradually built-up system that has gone down in history as War Communism. In carrying out War Communism measures, the Soviet Government made an assault or "frontal attack" on all the positions of capital.

At that time, when the young, still weak Soviet system was making progress in the most difficult circumstances, and beating its enemies by resolute revolutionary measures, the masses were full of enthusiasm and a feeling of confidence in their own strength. It seemed to many the "frontal attack" on capital was taking the country straight to the approaches to communism. This enthusiasm, without which it would have been impossible to surmount the gigantic, inhuman difficulties confronting the builders of the new Russia, was displayed in various spheres of life. A. V. Lunacharsky wrote that the work of the People's Commissariat for Education in 1920 also bore "the stamp of storm and assault". "Everything then was borne along by a turbulent current, full of the staff's revolutionary enthusiasm, belief in themselves, and a certain, say, youthful effervescence.... I think that a process of that kind was experienced by almost all the Commissariats, which was quite natural. It was necessary to proclaim our ideals at the top of our voice and ruthlessly to smash that which did not go with us. It was difficult then to speak of half-measures, of stages, of approaching such an ideal step by step".¹

M. N. Pokrovsky, Lunacharsky's deputy, and head of the Socialist Academy of Social Sciences, also wrote of this: "It seemed that since we succeeded so brilliantly on the military front, we would manage equally well both in education and in the economy... We—I say this frankly, because I experienced it myself—we were to some extent drunk with this speed. Things were developing so fast that it seemed to us that we were very close to communism—communism built by our own means, without waiting for victory of the proletarian revolution in the West."²

The War Communism measures were really necessary for the proletarian state in the circumstances of a most savage civil war. They fulfilled an historic mission, ensuring victory over all enemies. Referring to War Communism, Lenin wrote later: "We deserve credit for it." But, he went on, "just how much credit is a fact of equal im-

¹ *Report of the People's Commissariat of Education to the Ninth Congress of Soviets*, Moscow, 1922, p. 4 (in Russian).

² M.N. Pokrovsky, *Seven Years of the Proletarian Dictatorship*, Moscow, 1924, p. 8 (in Russian).

portance. It was the war and the ruin that forced us into War Communism. It was not, and could not be, a policy that corresponded to the economic tasks of the proletariat. It was a makeshift".¹

In the very hard conditions in which the Soviet Republic found itself the working class not only won out in the armed struggle against enemies but also made considerable advances on the economic front. In spite of the contraction of the material and technical foundation a war economy was built up that fed both front and rear. The vast advantages of the new social system made themselves felt, enabling the working class to exercise centralised control of the economy and to use all available resources in a planned way. Although the wartime situation did not permit a single plan of economic development to be carried out for the whole country, the task of drafting one was posed precisely in those years.

In the spring of 1920, when a peaceful breathing spell had been won, S. I. Gusev, a leading figure in the Party and at that time a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Caucasus Front, compared the Soviet Republic's economy, in his pamphlet *Immediate Problems of Economic Development*, with a colossal half-ruined building. Its walls and foundations were shaky, the rafters and roof had fallen in in some places, the ceilings had collapsed, the wiring was torn out, and the water pipes were burst. Just how were they to tackle repair of this building?² Lenin, who read the pamphlet very attentively, set the highest value on Gusev's suggestion to start with a single economic plan for restoring industry and production in the whole country, and to subordinate everything to it.³ G. M. Krzhizhanovsky wrote an article in *Pravda*, with Lenin's support, on the tasks of electrifying Russia, and then published a pamphlet on the subject.⁴

The matter of drafting a single plan for building the economy on a new technical basis, i.e., of electrification and the development of heavy industry, was considered at the Ninth Congress of the RCP(B) in March-April 1920. The Congress paid great attention to the issue of improving the management of production, and proposed strengthening one-man management and raising the responsibility of the leadership, while at the same time drawing the workers into the management of production. Lenin called on the Party to devote all its energies to restoring the country's economy. He said that "in this

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Tax in Kind", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 343.

² S.I. Gusev, *Immediate Problems of Economic Development (Apropos of the CC RCP Theses)*. Material for the Ninth Congress of the RCP, Saratov, 1920, pp. 3-12 (in Russian).

³ V.I. Lenin, "Ninth Congress of the R.C.P.(B)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 461.

⁴ G.M. Krzhizhanovsky, *Basic Tasks of the Electrification of Russia*, Moscow, 1920 (in Russian).

work, the eyes of the workers of all countries are upon us, they expect new victories of us".¹ A special State Commission on the Electrification of Russia (GOELRO) set up under the leadership of Krzhizhanovsky presented a detailed report to the Eighth Congress of Soviets in December 1920.² Lenin called the GOELRO plan the Party's "second programme"; it noted the primary concrete tasks for industrialising the country and laying the material and technical foundation of socialism, and proposed the building of 30 large power stations. The contrast between the country's utter ruin and devastation and the majestic perspectives of its electrification was so great that H. G. Wells, the famous English writer of science fiction and a friend of Russia, could not believe in their reality and called Lenin "the dreamer in the Kremlin". Describing his talk with Lenin in November 1920, he wrote: "Can one imagine a more courageous project in a vast flat land of forests and illiterate peasants, with no water power, with no technical skill available, and with trade and industry at the last gasp?... But their [i.e., these plans'—*Ed*] application to Russia is an altogether greater strain upon the constructive imagination."³

As a result of the working class's revolutionary transforming activity in the first years of Soviet government the social and economic structure of the country was radically altered. The main instruments and means of production had become national property, and all the arable land had passed to the use of the peasants. The bourgeoisie had been routed, and the landlords had ceased to exist as a class. Some members of the exploiter classes had fled abroad, the rest were adapting to the new conditions, and had taken jobs in enterprises and institutions. The kulaks (the rural bourgeoisie), who constituted around 10 per cent of the farm population of the European part of Russia at the end of 1919, were weakened economically and politically. The poorest peasantry, having received land, had largely risen to the level of the middle peasants (60 per cent of the farm population).⁴ The class of farm labourers—the most impoverished and exploited part of the peasantry—had been reduced in numbers. A new contingent of the working class had appeared—the workers on state farms, i.e., state-owned socialist enterprises in the countryside. It had taken shape mainly from former farm

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Ninth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 490.

² *The Plan of Electrification of the RSFSR. Report of the State Commission on the Electrification of Russia to the Eighth Congress of Soviets*, Moscow, 1920 (in Russian).

³ H.G. Wells, *Russia in the Shadows*, New York, George H. Doran Company, 1921, pp. 158-159.

⁴ L.M. Spirin, *Classes and Parties in the Civil War in Russia*, Moscow, 1968, p. 385 (in Russian).

labourers and from urban workers who had come to the villages; in spite of its small numbers (only around 4,000 small state farms had been set up), this group influenced the surrounding peasant population.

The working class, having become the dominant class, was already not only a producer of material values but was also the owner and organiser of the social means of production. At the end of 1920 93.4 per cent of all workers were employed in state-owned factories.¹ Small enterprises predominated in building and public utilities, etc., and they had not been nationalised to the same extent. On the whole, a little more than 20 per cent of all workers were engaged in the private sector, while the overwhelming majority worked in the socialist sector and had been emancipated from capitalist oppression.² The position of the workers in private enterprises, however, had also been radically altered. The rights of bosses had been substantially limited, and their operations were under the strict control of the working class. All Soviet laws on labour and workers' rights had been extended to these undertakings.

Through its storming the foundations of capitalism in 1917-1920 with the support of the working peasantry, the working class had won and defended positions that the workers had never before had in any country, positions that it staunchly defended and consolidated during the bitter civil war.

THE RULING CLASS

The working class of Soviet Russia, having become the dominant, leading class, took on the very difficult job of being the creative vehicle of socialist reform in the political, economic and cultural spheres of society's affairs. The conversion of a class that not long before had still been oppressed and destitute into the ruling class was an intricate, difficult business.

The inner strength of the Russian working class was primarily rooted in its political consciousness and organising capacity, acquired during a class struggle that had been marked by three major revolutionary explosions during the life of a single generation. Social-Democrats, both in Russia and abroad, had always underestimated one historical factor, Lenin said, that is to say "the revolutionary determination, firmness, and steadfastness of the proletariat". The working class of Russia had displayed these qualities fully during

¹ *Publications of the Central Statistical Administration*, Vol. 27, Issue 1, pp. 18-33 (in Russian).

² E. Kviring, "The Social Structure of the Industry of the USSR", *Planovoye khozyaistvo*, No. 3, 1928, p. 16.

the civil war, and had shown its ability in deeds to devote all its strength and all its readiness for self-sacrifice to the struggle: "The determination of the working class, its inflexible adherence to the watchword 'Death rather than surrender!' is not only a historical factor, it is the decisive, the winning factor."¹

The Russian working class's high degree of organisation enabled it to win power. The winning of power in turn provided prodigious opportunities for developing its organisations. The system of social and state administration built up in the first years after the revolution above all guaranteed the leading role of the working class and its organisations.

The backbone and brain of proletarian organisation was the Communist Party, which united the advanced, most politically-conscious part of the working class, and was continually reinforced by the best members of that class. In spite of the great losses the Party suffered during the civil war, the total number of Communists more than doubled—from 350,000 at the end of 1917 to 730,000 in 1920.² Working people dedicated to Soviet government, above all workers, joined the Party. In the autumn of 1919, the Soviet Republic's most difficult days, a quarter of a million workers joined the Party's ranks, which was a clear demonstration of the working class's resolve to save its native land from disaster. By 1921 there were four times as many workers in the Party as at the beginning of 1918. They constituted its basis, its skeleton—more than 40 per cent of its membership.³ But the main point was that the Party was truly proletarian in ideology, programme, and policy.

The Programme of the RCP(B), drafted with Lenin's decisive participation, and adopted by the Eighth Party Congress in March 1919, defined the tasks of the working class's party and the proletarian dictatorship for the whole period of the transition from capitalism to socialism. It counterposed proletarian democracy to bourgeois democracy, stressing that "the leading role of the urban industrial proletariat in the whole revolution, as the most concentrated, united, educated, and battle-hardened part of the working masses, is shown both in the very rise of Soviets and during the whole course of their evolution into organs of power". Explaining the temporary character of certain of the advantages granted to the workers by the Soviet Constitution, the Programme proposed using them in order "to unite the most backward and most dispersed masses of the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians and the middle peasantry more

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Ninth Congress of the R.C.P.(B)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 454.

² *History of the CPSU*, Vol. 3, Book 2, p. 554.

³ *1922 All-Russia Census of RCP Members*, Issue 4, Moscow, 1923, p. 37 (in Russian).

closely with the advanced workers as a counterweight to the narrow craft and sectional interests that capitalism bred among the workers".¹

In the economic field the Programme stipulated the following: completing the conversion of the means of production into national property; comprehensive development of the productive forces; planned, rational, economical use of material resources; involvement of the trade unions in direct management of the economy; maximum use of manpower; creation of a new, socialist discipline; the drawing in of scientists and technicians; the bringing together of workers by hand and brain, separated and divided by capitalism; abolition of the opposition between town and country; development of science and its convergence with production; the organisation of large-scale, socialist farming; and a rise in the material and cultural standard of the working people.

While the Communist Party united the vanguard of the working class, the broad masses of the workers were joining the trade unions, whose membership had already risen to three million by the beginning of 1918. With triumph of the revolution and the nationalisation of industry the unions' previous main function of defending the workers' economic interests against capitalist exploitation had largely disappeared. They got new functions, namely, to educate, mobilise, and organise the working class to tackle the job of building socialism.

The trade unions, expressing the interests of the broad masses of the working people, were supposed to take an active part in all the work of the Soviet state and in fact did. The Mensheviks tried to drive a wedge between the unions and the Communist Party and Soviet Government, arguing the old theory of trade union "neutrality". This point of view was refuted at the First All-Russia Congress of Trade Unions in January 1918. The Congress resolution said that "there is no neutrality in the great historic struggle between revolutionary socialism and its opponents, and cannot be".²

In the early years of Soviet government the unions' activity was primarily subordinated to the job of mobilising the war and labour efforts of the working class to smash the foreign intervention and the Russian counter-revolution. They took part in mobilisation campaigns and military training, in organising the production of arms, and in supplying the workers with food. There was no sector of government, economic management, and the production activities of the Soviet Republic that they were not actively working in. They also developed opportunities unknown in the past for accumulating

¹ *The CPSU in Resolutions...*, Vol. 2, p. 44.

² *First All-Russia Congress of Trade Unions, 7-14 January 1918. Full Verbatim Report*, Moscow, 1918, p. 364 (in Russian).

the initiative of the rank and file, and carrying out measures to improve the workers' economic situation, working and living conditions, and culture.

While Lenin stressed that the main thing in the unions' work after the Revolution was education of the builders of the new society, he also pointed out that they "no longer have to face the *class* economic struggle but the *non-class* 'economic struggle', which means combating bureaucratic distortions of the Soviet apparatus, safeguarding the working people's material and spiritual interests in ways and means inaccessible to this apparatus, etc. This is a struggle they will unfortunately have to face for many more years to come..."¹

One of the features of union activity was that the trade unions were performing certain state functions in the sphere of industrial organisation and management, which provided an indissoluble link between the proletarian state, the national economy, and the masses of the workers. As the Programme of the RCP(B) said, "trade unions' involvement in running the economy and drawing the broad masses into it is also, at the same time, the main means of combating bureaucratisation of the economic apparatus of Soviet government and provides an opportunity for exercising real people's control over the results of production".² The unions were involved in the establishing of work quotas and wage rates, the organisation of labour protection, and in consolidating labour discipline. They had to perform these functions because the new economic machinery was still only being built. The Communist Party had to fight mistaken views on this issue in its own ranks, as well as the views of the Mensheviks.

Certain Party and trade union activists considered that the unions no longer had specific tasks of any kind in the new circumstances, and that it was necessary to pass the whole management of public industry to them. These views had already been condemned by the Second All-Russia Trade Union Congress at the beginning of 1919.³ The Ninth Congress of the RCP(B) stressed that unions should deal with economic and organisational matters, taking part in the economic activity of government authorities under the guidance of the Communist Party.⁴

Another group of activists, led by Trotsky, called for complete fusing and merger of the unions and economic bodies, and their im-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Current Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 100.

² *The CPSU in Resolutions...*, Vol. 2, p. 51.

³ *Second All-Russia Trade Union Congress. Resolutions Passed at the Sessions of 16-25 January 1919*, Moscow, 1919, pp. 9-10 (in Russian).

⁴ *Ninth Congress of the RCP(B), March-April 1920. Minutes*, Moscow, 1960, p. 417 (in Russian).

mediate "etatisation". That meant, in fact, liquidation of the unions. The Communist Party rejected this proposal, too. Lenin, when evaluating the role and tasks of the unions under the new social system, said that the trade union "is not a state organisation; nor is it one designed for coercion, but for education. It is an organisation designed to draw in and to train; it is, in fact, a school; a school of administration, a school of economic management, a school of communism".¹

The system of Soviets at all levels was the directly ruling organisation throughout the country. Workers had a leading role in it, and not just in the towns. Advanced revolutionary workers from the major industrial centres could be found then in all corners of the vastness of Russia. Seconded by Party and trade union organisations, they were working everywhere as organisers and leaders of the organs of Soviet government. In December 1919 M. I. Kalinin, Chairman of the Presidium of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, said: "If you travel about the Russian Soviet Republic, comrades, you will find Red Petrograders everywhere: in regional Soviets, in rural Soviets, on all fronts, and in all executive committees."²

Workers headed many executive committees of the Soviets. At the beginning of 1919 the chairman of the Vyatka Provincial Executive Committee was S. A. Novoselov, an industrial worker and member of the Bolshevik Party since 1905, who had been prosecuted many times by the tsarist authorities for his involvement in the revolutionary movement. The chairman of the Executive Committee of the Kursk City Soviet was S. I. Pakhomov, a metal worker and member of the Party since 1912. The Voronezh City Soviet was headed by M. D. Stepanov, a fitter and also a member of the Party since 1912. The Yaroslavl Provincial Committee was headed by P. I. Rayevsky, a worker Communist involved in the revolutionary movement since 1906, while the Ivanovo-Voznesensk City Executive Committee was chaired by V. P. Kuznetsov, a worker, member of the Party since 1902.³

Kostroma provided a typical picture of the industrial towns. Twelve of the 14 members of the Executive Committee of the City Soviet elected there at the beginning of 1919 were workers. Their biographies, too, were typical of the members of the Soviet apparatus of the time.

P. A. Blyakhin, the chairman, age 32, had been a bookbinder, then a compositor, teacher, and labourer on the oil fields; he had

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Trade Unions, the Present Situation and Trotsky's Mistakes", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 20.

² *Seventh All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants', Red Army-men's and Cossacks' Deputies. Verbatim Report*, Moscow, 1920, p. 5 (in Russian).

³ E.G. Gimpelson, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

been a Communist since 1903, had taken part in the armed Moscow insurrection in 1905, and had been imprisoned many times; during the October Revolution he had been one of the organisers of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies in Baku, and then had carried on trade union and local government work in Kostroma.

D. E. Berezin, age 27, was a metal worker; had been a Communist since 1911, when he was tried for participation in a strike in Yaroslavl; he was a member of the board of the Metal Workers' Union.

A. A. Simanovsky, age 57, was a turner, a Communist since 1904; he had been elected to the Kostroma Soviet in 1905, and had been tried many times for revolutionary activity. In December 1917 he was a member of the revolutionary committee, a member of the Presidium of the Central Council of Trade Unions, and chairman of the Metal Workers' Union.

I. S. Zubov, age 31, a bricklayer, member of the Party since 1917, had been prosecuted by the tsarist authorities for revolutionary propaganda in 1905 and 1906.

P. I. Smirnov, age 29, a textile worker, a Communist since January 1918, had taken part in the revolutionary movement since 1905, and had been sentenced to imprisonment and exile in 1914.

P. I. Ryzhakov, age 30, a fitter, a Communist since August 1917, had belonged to workers' study groups before the Revolution.

E. K. Gromova, age 28, a hospital nurse, a Communist since 1917, was a member of the board of the Union of Workers and Office Employees at Soviet Institutions.

N. V. Nefedov, age 29, a metal worker, a Communist since December 1917, had taken part in the strike movement before the Revolution.

I. V. Fyodorov, age 39, a worker (trade not known), had been a Communist since 1916.

A. G. Karmanova, age 42, a textile worker, a Communist since 1905 when she was a member of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, had been imprisoned for revolutionary activity; she had been involved in Soviet, trade union, and Party work since 1917.

K. V. Volkov, age 43, was a textile worker, and a Communist since February 1919.

A. A. Zolotov, age 25, a harness-maker, a Communist since 1918, was chairman of the trade unions council.¹

The workers who were members of executive committees and chairmen of Soviets were closely linked with their constituents and well acquainted with their needs. The People's Commissar of Health, N. I. Semashko, related, after a trip to Naro-Fominsk, where the

¹ *Activity of the Kostroma City Soviet of Workers' Deputies, 1918-1919, Kostroma, 1919, pp. V-VII (in Russian).*

members of the executive committee were mainly local workers, that they lived "all together in the workers' barracks.... When any misunderstanding arose, they were on the spot, people dropped in on them whenever necessary; their whole life is in the public eye, there is no gossip and whispering about their rations, sugar, kerosene; on the contrary, everyone sympathises with them; 'They do so much work but live like us'. That is also useful for the executive committee members themselves. They know and understand: today they are the authorities, tomorrow they'll be rank-and-file members of this worker family."¹

The working conditions of the members of executive committees in the first years of the Soviet Republic were described, for instance, in the report of the Pskov Provincial Executive Committee to the Provincial Congress of Soviets in October 1920: "We are accustomed to work without changing our clothes for several months, ready at any minute to go into battle. More than once the whole provincial executive committee has lain in the trenches, more than one member of the Provincial EC has lost his life or his health defending every inch of our native land. And the Ostrov, Pskov, Porkhov, and Opochka workers, whose hands are as used to a rifle as to a plough or hammer, pen and penholder? The Revolution said to us 'Be Prepared', and we have always answered 'Always Ready!'"²

At the end of 1920 workers were nearly 62 per cent of the leading personnel of the agencies of the Supreme Economic Council, provincial economic councils, and their collegia and chief committees, and enterprises. "...We have made a *start* on production training," Lenin stressed, "by having about a thousand workers, and trade union members and delegates take part in management and run factories, head offices and other bodies higher up the scale."³ Nearly 75 per cent of all the deputies of the Moscow Soviet in 1920 belonged to the working class, and 71.1 per cent in Petrograd. Workers constituted 32.8 per cent of the delegates to provincial Soviet congresses, and 16.2 per cent to district congresses. Workers were 36.5 per cent of the membership of provincial executive committees and around 32 per cent of district ones.⁴

Although Soviet laws granted the broad masses every opportunity to take a direct part in administration, these opportunities were not always made use of at first. In the early days the working class was

¹ *Pravda*, 9 September 1920.

² E.G. Gimpelson, *Soviets in the Foreign Intervention and Civil War Years*, Moscow, 1968, p. 119 (in Russian).

³ V.I. Lenin, "Once Again on the Trade Unions...", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 90.

⁴ M.F. Vladimirsky, *Soviets, Their Executive Committees and Congresses*, Issue 2, Moscow, 1921, pp. 26, 36, 37; *Red Moscow*, Moscow, 1920, p. 47; E.G. Gimpelson, *op. cit.*, pp. 497, 499 (all in Russian).

only able to throw up a small, creative, active fraction that was directed to leading work in Party, Soviet, and economic agencies. The masses of the working people could not take a direct part in administration because, as Lenin said at the Eighth Congress of the RCP(B) "Apart from the law there is still the level of culture, which you cannot subject to any law". It was this low cultural level that determined that "the Soviets, which by virtue of their programme are organs of government *by the working people*, are in fact organs of government *for the working people* by the advanced section of the proletariat".¹

Western falsifiers, tearing these words out of context, often interpret them as an "admission" that it is not the working people themselves but only their representatives, a certain special "administrative elite", who govern in the socialist state. But the essence of Lenin's idea was quite different. Regretting the narrowness of the circle of administrators in the first years of Soviet government, he called for encouraging its extension in every way possible along with the growth of the literacy, education, and culture of the working people, above all of the working class. "We must secure help. According to all indications, such a reserve is growing up within the country. There cannot be the slightest doubt of the existence of a tremendous thirst for knowledge and of tremendous progress in educating the working people... All indications go to show that we shall obtain a vast reserve in the near future, which will replace the representatives of the small section of proletarians who have overstrained themselves in the work".² The problem was thus one of drawing millions and millions of new people of labour into administration through the extension of education.

"The proletariat," Lenin told the delegates to the Eighth Congress of the RCP(B), "as you are very well aware, is not free from the shortcomings and weaknesses of capitalist society. It is fighting for socialism, but at the same time is fighting against its own shortcomings." The main drawback inherited from the past was the low level of literacy, education, and culture, which was only partially compensated, as Lenin noted, by the fact that "the best and foremost section of the proletariat, which carried on a desperate struggle in the cities for decades, was in a position to acquire in the course of that struggle the culture of life in the capital and other cities, and to a certain extent did acquire it".³

True, in pre-revolutionary Russia, the working class was more literate than the average for the whole adult population, but 36

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 183.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 183-184.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

per cent of the industrial workers were illiterate, according to 1918 data.¹ The Soviet Government, the Communist Party, and the trade unions therefore developed a struggle on an unbelievable scale to wipe out illiteracy among the adult population.² Illiterates were educated at government expense; their working day was reduced by two hours on school days, with no reduction of pay. In the RSFSR alone, in 1920, there were nearly 24,000 schools for eliminating illiteracy.³

The working class also needed to improve its general educational and vocational training. Cultural work therefore became a very important part of the business of moulding a new personality, free of petty-bourgeois views and private property habits, consciously and creatively involved in building socialist society.

A broad network of cultural and educational institutions was organised. Whereas there had been only 13,876 public libraries and 237 community centres in tsarist Russia in 1914, there were around 25,000 public libraries, more than 4,000 cultural centres, and 3,500 community centres in the Land of Soviets battling in 1920 against foreign intervention and whiteguards.⁴ Libraries, cultural centres, and community centres were opened in the nationalised palaces and mansions of the tsarist nobility, capitalists, and landowners. In March 1919 Lenin said, speaking at the First Congress of Farm Labourers of Petrograd Gubernia (Province): "I am particularly pleased to note that here in Petrograd, where there are so many beautiful buildings, palaces, which were not built for the right purposes, our comrades have quite properly converted them into premises for meetings, congresses, and conferences of precisely those classes of the population which worked to build them, which have built them for centuries, but which were never allowed to come within a mile of them!"⁵

The Soviet government made all the treasures of culture—theatres, museums, art galleries, conservatoires—accessible to the working class and other working people. By exercising ideological influence on the way cultural institutions worked, the Communist Party sought to make them serve the cause of communist education, and employed

¹ A.G. Rashin, *The Moulding of the Working Class of Russia. Historical and Economic Essays*, Moscow, 1958, p. 600 (in Russian).

² For further details see V.A. Kumanev, *Socialism and Universal Literacy*, Moscow, 1967 (in Russian).

³ *Publications of the Central Statistical Administration*, Vol. 12, Issue 1, Moscow, 1922, pp. 118-19 (in Russian).

⁴ *Cultural Development in the USSR. A Statistical Handbook*, Moscow, 1956, p. 9; *Publications of the Central Statistical Administration*, Vol. 8, Issue 1, Chapter 16 (both in Russian).

⁵ V.I. Lenin, "Session of the First Congress of Farm Labourers of Petrograd Gubernia, March 13, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 40.

all forms of political work (rallies, talks, gatherings, various congresses and conferences) to make the workers more class-conscious.

The role of the periodical press—Party, Soviet, and trade union—in the political education of the working class was immense. In spite of the lack of paper and printing plant, many central newspapers (*Pravda*, *Izvestia*, *Ekonomicheskaya zhizn*, *Byednota*, etc.), and local ones were published. According to incomplete data for 1920 there were 246 provincial and 334 district newspapers. Around 60 papers were issued in languages of the peoples of the RSFSR.¹ The Party and Soviet press published articles, and whole pages, specially intended for men and women workers. The trade union press (in addition to the publications of the Central Council of Trade Unions, there were 22 newspapers in 1920 issued by the Central Committees of the industrial unions and 122 provincial and 12 district union papers)² dealt in detail with workers' production activity and their involvement in administration of the state and enterprises, and generalised and propagandised the best experience.

The scale of cultural and educational work was maintained by the creative elan and enthusiasm of the workers. As Lenin said at the All-Russia Congress on Education: "The working people are thirsting for knowledge because they need it to win. Nine out of ten of the working people have realised that knowledge is a weapon in their struggle for emancipation, that their failures are due to lack of education, and that now it is up to them really to give everyone access to education".³

The job of transforming capitalist society into a socialist one, incomparable in its complexity, could only be tackled by exploiting the highest achievements of pure and applied science and culture. The building of the new socialist society could only be raised on a foundation of the knowledge accumulated in the past, which had to be assimilated completely, yet critically. Far from everybody understood that. Even before the October Revolution proletarian cultural and educational organisations (Proletkult) had been founded, which developed large-scale work among young workers (especially after triumph of the Revolution) in order to bring art to them. But the Proletkult leadership (A. A. Bogdanov, V. F. Pletnev) mistakenly pictured the road to building a new, Soviet culture, had a nihilistic

¹ *The Party and Soviet Press in the Fight to Build Socialism and Communism*, Part I (1917-1941), Moscow, 1961, p. 13 (in Russian); *Zhizn natsionalnostei*, 7 November 1920.

² *Report of the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions, March 1920-April 1921*, Moscow, 1921, p. 18 (in Russian); *USSR Central State Archives of the October Revolution*, f. 5451, op. 4, d. 330, l. 34-37.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Speech at the First All-Russia Congress on Education, August 28, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 87.

attitude to the achievements of the past, and denied the principle of continuity in the evolution of culture.

Lenin condemned the attempts of the "left" Proletkultists to invent their "own particular brand" of proletarian culture, and to stand aside from the mainstream of human cultural progress as "theoretically unsound and practically harmful".¹ "We must," he wrote and repeated, "take the entire culture that capitalism left behind and build socialism with it. We must take all its science, technology, knowledge and art."² This premise of Lenin's was based on a Marxian evaluation of the pre-bourgeois and bourgeois cultural heritage linked with the thesis of continuity in the evolution of society.

The new dominant class, however, still did not have its own intelligentsia even to meet the current need for specialists, let alone future needs. This was one of the most urgent and complicated issues of the initial stages of the transition period. Lenin saw drawing of intellectuals with a capitalist and petty-bourgeois background into the building of socialism as a first step toward solving this problem.

All the wealth that constituted the aggregate of the cultural heritage which the working class had to assimilate, he explained, was concentrated "in the heads and hands" of the old specialists. Even during the foreign intervention and civil war the Soviet government spent big sums on developing science and culture, striving to make all their true values the property of the popular masses. This naturally attracted the intelligentsia. New universities, institutes, and laboratories were opened. Many famous scientists carried on important research, in spite of enormous material privations: K. A. Timiryazev, N. E. Zhukovsky, I. A. Kablukov and D. N. Anuchin at Moscow University; V. L. Komarov and D. S. Rozhdestvensky in Petrograd. The great physiologist I. P. Pavlov, the famous geologist and President of the Academy of Sciences, A. P. Karpinsky, the eminent physicist A. F. Ioffe, and other prominent scientists carried on fruitful work in Soviet Russia.

The scientists' work was linked with national economic tasks. Eminent scientists and engineers (G. O. Graftio, E. Ya. Shulgin, A. A. Gorev, I. G. Alexandrov, L. K. Ramzin, K. A. Krug, and M. A. Shatelen) helped draft the GOELRO Plan. The workers and peasants highly appreciated the progressive scientists. The workers of the Kursk Railway Shops, for instance, elected K. A. Timiryazev their deputy to the Moscow Soviet.

Lenin expected intellectuals' cooperation with workers to lead to a radical social reorientation of the bourgeois specialists, and

¹ V.I. Lenin, "On Proletarian Culture", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 317.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Achievements and Difficulties of the Soviet Government", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 70.

conversion of the overwhelming majority of them into a contingent of the new Soviet intelligentsia.¹ But the drawing of specialists trained before the Revolution into the building of socialism was only one plank in Lenin's programme. Another, equally important, was for the working class to train its own intelligentsia. The first step toward that was "promotion" or "seconding", the essence of which was to assign thousands and thousands of working people, primarily workers, to leading posts, people whose capacities, inclinations, and talents had been discovered and brought out during the developing socialist revolution. They acquired certain skills of managing production on practical jobs, assimilating the experience of the specialists. This practice quickly became established and widespread. In 1921 more than 3,500 workers were in command posts in industry,² which meant that a worker-appointee was at the head of one enterprise in three; in the textile and metal-working industries the percentage was even higher, while in the army and navy workers and peasants constituted two-thirds of the commanders.³

In order to train cadres of a new, Soviet intelligentsia from workers and peasants and their children, irrespective of sex and nationality, the Communist Party had to restructure the whole educational system. An edict of the Council of People's Commissars of 2 August 1918 abolished all restrictions on entry into higher educational establishments, and fees for education. A resolution of the CPC provided for priority enrollment of persons from the proletariat and poor peasantry, and the granting of scholarships to them.⁴ Workers' faculties (*rabfaks*)—a special form of general educational training—played a major role in the implementing of the Party's programme, namely to make universities and colleges widely accessible to workers. The *rabfaks*, founded in the autumn of 1919, rapidly equipped students with the knowledge they needed in order to continue their education successfully.

The Soviet Government paid much attention to the workers' social conditions. A system of maternity and child protection institutions was set up. Children's consultation clinics were opened, baby's milk centres, mother and child homes, and pre-school institutions (kindergartens, infant homes, etc.). In 1917 there had been only 34 such; in 1921 there were already around 2,500.⁵ Free schooling of children began to be introduced, with free school meals and text-

¹ For fuller details see S.A. Fedyukin, *The October Revolution and the Intelligentsia*, Moscow, 1972 (in Russian).

² A.E. Beilin, *Cadres of Specialists in the USSR. Their Formation and Growth*, Moscow, 1935, p. 9 (in Russian).

³ P.P. Amelin, *The Intelligentsia and Socialism*, Leningrad, 1970, p. 110 (in Russian).

⁴ *Decrees of the Soviet Government*, Vol. 3, pp. 138, 141 (in Russian).

⁵ *Five Years of Soviet Government*, Moscow, 1922, p. 525 (in Russian).

books. For the first time the majority of workers and peasants got the chance to give their children an education.

Yet, in spite of all the measures undertaken by the Soviet authorities to improve the material and cultural position of the workers, their life remained hard. But the realisation that they had the power, and that it was necessary to make sacrifices for the future, sustained their strength and moral fortitude. The working class realised that its difficulties and privations were temporary, and that the main thing was to defend the great gains of the socialist revolution. The American journalist Albert Rhys Williams, an eye-witness of and participant in the revolutionary events, said of the Russian workers: "Their ability to grasp large political ideas has astounded all observers who have gone below the surface in Russia."¹

In August 1920 Lenin received an invitation from workers in Cheremkhovo, who wrote: "We are confident that under your leadership and that of the Communist Party the proletariat of the whole world will attain its full and final emancipation, in spite of millions of obstacles, in spite of disruption, famine, and sickness, in the fight against despair-maddened employers, bankers, landowners, and generals."² Replying to them, Lenin said that he particularly appreciated their profound confidence in the full and final victory of Soviet government over all exploiters, and their indomitable resolution to overcome all obstacles and difficulties. He stressed: "It is from this firmness of the working class and toiling masses that, like every other Communist, I draw my confidence in the inevitable world victory of the workers and the workers' cause."³

Not all workers, of course, had these high political and moral qualities. The working class could not be, and was not homogeneous; it consisted of various strata and groups. In addition to the advanced contingents of workers conscious of their class role and their new position in society, there were politically backward strata, guided by petty-bourgeois ideas. Among them there were frequent signs of low work discipline, absenteeism, and lateness for work, and misappropriation and embezzlement of industrial property. The closing of plants because of lack of raw materials and fuel, the economic disorganisation of the country, and famine led to a lowering of some workers' class consciousness, and to demoralisation even of separate groups of experienced, trained workers. In trying to improve their material position, they took up hand trades, and

¹ Albert Rhys Williams, *Lenin. The Man and His Work*, Scott and Seltzer, New York, 1919, p. 108.

² *Working People's Letters to Lenin. 1917-1924*, Moscow, 1960, p. 197 (in Russian).

³ V.I. Lenin, "To the Cheremkhovo Coal Miners", *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, p. 456.

went in for handicraft production at home and profiteering.

Lenin wrote: "Doesn't the class struggle in the epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism take the form of safeguarding the interests of the working *class* against the few, the groups and sections of workers who stubbornly cling to capitalist traditions and continue to regard the Soviet state in the old way: work as little and as badly as they can and grab as much money as possible from the state."¹

Party and trade union organisations fought a persistent battle to foster socialist, conscious work discipline. The main way was by conviction, but coercive measures were also taken against deliberate offenders. In 1918, on workers' initiative, comrades' courts were set up, which were elected by the workers themselves and kept a watch on work discipline, and decided punishments for breach of it (from warning to expulsion from the trade union and sacking from the enterprise).

The example of progressive workers who embodied the best features of their class was of great educative significance. Proletarian class-consciousness and self-sacrifice were displayed by many workers in Petrograd and Moscow. An example of constructive initiative and activity was given in the spring of 1919 by the worker Communists of the Moscow marshalling yard of the Kazan Railway, who decided to work overtime once a week (on Saturday) without pay for the sake of complete victory over the enemy. Lenin called these Saturdays "a great beginning" of communist labour, seeing them as a fact of immense historical significance, evidence of the beginning of a turn in the masses' consciousness and attitude to work. The great beginning was taken up all over the country. On the first Saturday (*subbotnik*) 781 Communists took part, but they gradually drew in more and more non-Party workers. In November 1919 around 10,000 Communists and more than 6,000 non-Party workers worked on Saturdays in Moscow, and in February 1920 15,000 Communists and 26,000 non-Party workers.²

On the All-Russia May Day *subbotnik* in 1920 425,000 persons took part in Moscow alone, 165,000 in Petrograd, and at least 15 million in the country as a whole.³ *Pravda* wrote of this Saturday working in Moscow: "There is no power in the world, and never has been, that could bring out 400,000 persons in one town alone at a single call for unpaid work. Let the enemies of Soviet govern-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Character of Our Newspapers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 97.

² *At the Sources of Communist Labour*, Moscow, 1959, p. 118 (in Russian).

³ *Izvestia VTsIK*, 5 May 1920; *History of the USSR*, Vol. 7, Moscow, 1967, p. 566 (in Russian).

ment take good note of that.”¹ The *subbotnik* was evidence that a substantial psychological shift had taken place in the consciousness of the vanguard of the working people, which meant a vital victory over inertia and petty-bourgeois narrowness. “Only when *this* victory is consolidated,” Lenin wrote, “will the new social discipline, socialist discipline, be created.”²

With time a responsible attitude toward their factory was consolidated in the workers. When it was impossible, for instance, to go over to three-shift working at the Chusovoi Works in early 1920, because of the lack of electric lamps, the workers brought their own light bulbs from their flats and installed them in the works.³ During restoration of the Podolsk Locomotive Works they lacked the needed machine tools. The workers searched out and brought in 200 old lathes and other tools and converted them themselves; there was no hard steel for saws, so they employed a method of fast rotation that made it possible to cut metal with soft steel. The workers’ various proposals were largely responsible for the success of the work.⁴

The objectively new position of the working class in society, and its awareness of its role and responsibility for the fate of the Soviet Republic, encouraged the development and adoption of new criteria for appreciating a person and his dignity, honour, and duty. The most respected person became the worker who set an example at work, and increased his productivity. A tradition had already grown up in those years of publicly honouring the best production workers—in inscribing their names on Red Boards of Honour and Respect and in Golden Books. Work collective gave the most distinguished workers the title Hero of Labour. The names of the front-runners of production became known far beyond their places of work.

Internationalism is a characteristic of the working class. It was displayed with unprecedented force during the October Revolution and years of civil war. The deepening of proletarian solidarity was furthered by the fact that people of all the nations of Russia and many other countries fought shoulder to shoulder with Russian workers and peasants against the whiteguards and interventionists, and defended Soviet government alongside them. M. I. Kalinin, welcoming the foreign Communists who had come for the Second Congress of the Comintern, said that “the Russian worker, and even the politically ignorant Russian peasant are being developed by the unfolding struggle against the Russian bourgeoisie and international capital better than by books and speeches”. At the same time, he said,

¹ *Pravda*, 29 May 1920.

² V.I. Lenin, “A Great Beginning”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 411.

³ A.T. Tikhun, *V.I. Lenin—Head of the Council of Labour and Defence in 1920*, Kiev, 1969, p. 78 (in Russian).

⁴ *Pravda*, 7 December 1920.

"they are looking to the oppressed classes of the West and the oppressed masses of the East with the greatest attention."¹

So a new social image of the working class began to take shape, and the consciousness and moral principles of the builder of socialist society were moulded. In remaking the relations of production, the working class remade itself. Having become the ruling class, it created a new and unprecedented attitude of the people toward state and government. A process of the transformation of the proletariat into a socialist working class had begun.

THE "HANDS OFF RUSSIA" MOVEMENT

When the imperialists of Germany and Austro-Hungary, and then Great Britain, France, the United States, Japan and other capitalist countries, swooped on the Republic of Soviets newly born in Russia, trying to strangle it, a wave of protest swept the world. The working class and other working people, and democratic opinion, angrily condemned the imperialist aggression, blocked development of the undeclared war, and expressed sympathy with the Soviet people.

The movement under the slogan "Hands Off Russia!" that developed in many countries, became a clear expression of the workers' solidarity with the Land of Soviets. Its main demand, constantly advanced at workers' meetings and demonstrations, congresses, and conferences, and in the progressive press, was immediate cessation of military support for the Russian counter-revolution, and of the economic blockade and armed foreign intervention. People of various countries and persuasions did their international duty, rising in defence of the world's first state of workers and peasants against the encroachments of the imperialist powers, conscious that help for the Soviet Republic was at the same time an integral part of their own fight for freedom and independence.

When German troops invaded the Baltic area, Byelorussia, and the Ukraine in February 1918, the German Spartakus revolutionary group said in a leaflet: "Germany sprang at the throat of the defenceless republic of workers and peasants like a highwayman... An area twice as big as all Germany has been stolen by force from the Russian Revolution... So Germany has now become the gendarme of capitalist reaction in all Europe and the German proletarians in uniform the hangmen of freedom and socialism!... We must cast off this dreadful ignominy!... We must save the honour of the German proletariat at the extreme hour!"² After a few months a revolution-

¹ *The Second Congress of the Comintern, July-August 1920, Moscow, 1934, p. 12 (in Russian).*

² *Spartakus im Kriege, Berlin, 1927, pp. 198-201.*

ary movement developed in the German and Austro-Hungarian occupation armies, in which solidarity with the Land of Soviets was interwoven with anti-war demands. After revolutions broke out in Austro-Hungary and Germany it became impossible to retain soldiers on Soviet soil: their discipline broke down, and they started for home, becoming the bearers of revolutionary ideas. When quitting the occupied areas the soldiers often handed over weapons and ammunition to units of the Red Army.¹

The right-wing leaders of German Social-Democracy, who came into office through the people's revolution, tried to block its further development and any drawing of German workers closer to Soviet Russia. They therefore supported the desire of the generals to halt the withdrawal of troops from the Ukraine and the Baltic area, and called for the formation of counter-revolutionary volunteer units to "guard the frontiers" and "combat Bolshevism". But the workers of Leipzig, Halle, Braunschweig, and other cities began to hold up troop trains moving east; the Soviets of Berlin and Braunschweig decided to impede the recruiting of volunteers. At the Constituent Congress of the Communist Party of Germany, Rosa Luxemburg exposed the conspiracy of the German rulers and the Entente imperialists and Baltic barons to prolong occupation of the Baltic areas as an attempt to seal "the world alliance of the capitalists of all countries against the struggling proletariat of the whole world".² Karl Liebknecht declared that the German proletariat was immensely indebted to Soviet Russia: it was guilty that "it had played havoc in Russia as the accomplice of German imperialism", and could only expiate its guilt by vigorous revolutionary action", blocking the joint actions of the imperialists of the Entente and Germany. It must remember that a "continuous stream of enthusiasm promoting the social revolution in Germany as well" came from Russia.³ In a telegram to the Soviet Republic the Congress of the KPD said: "The consciousness that all your hearts are beating in unison with us gives us strength and power in our struggle. Long live socialism! Long live the world revolution!"⁴ In the spring and summer

¹ For further details see: I.M. Kulinich, M.M. Koshik, *The Revolutionary Activity of the German Spartacus Communist Group in the Ukraine (1914-1919)*, Kiev, 1959 (in Ukrainian), *The November Revolution in Germany. Collection of Articles and Documents*, Moscow, 1960 (in Russian).

² *Protokoll des Gründungsparteitages der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (30. Dezember 1919-1. Januar 1919)*, Berlin, 1972, pp. 215-217, 222.

³ Helmut Trotnow, "Karl Liebknecht und die russische Revolution. Ein unveröffentlicher Diskussionsbeitrag Karl Liebknechts zu Karl Radeks Rede auf dem Gründungsparteitag der KPD 1918/19". In *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte, Herausgegeben von der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*, Vol. 23, Verlag Neue Gesellschaft, Bonn-Bad Godesberg, 1973, pp. 395-396.

⁴ *Protokoll des Gründungsparteitages...*, pp. 113-114.

of 1919 the workers repeatedly acted against the German adventures in the Baltic area.

A broad movement in defence of Soviet Russia developed in France, whose government had sent an expeditionary corps to the south of Russia at the end of 1918 numbering more than 40,000 soldiers, and had concentrated a fleet in the Black Sea. Dockers and railwaymen refused to load and transport weapons for the interventionist troops; soldiers and sailors demanded to be sent home and demobilised. In the National Assembly and in the press the Socialist deputy Marcel Cachin exposed the French imperialists' drive to play the role of European policeman. Jacques Sadoul communicated many facts in his letters from Moscow about the Entente's criminal acts against the Russian people. "The Allies want to destroy the Revolution and the Russian state. The plan is so obvious that all Russians have understood it and are moving toward a rapprochement with one another in order to face the peril. Many Russian patriots who are neither Bolsheviks nor even Socialists are joining the Red Army in order to defend Russia, threatened from abroad." Sadoul called on the workers of France to try and get an immediate recall of French troops, writing that "crushing of the Workers' and Peasants' Government of Moscow by the workers and peasants of France would be a colossal mistake and an ineradicable disgrace in the history of the European proletariat".¹

The organisations of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of the Ukraine in Odessa and other cities carried on great explanatory work among the soldiers and sailors of the French occupation force. General leadership was exercised by members of the Federation of Foreign Groups of the RCP(B), above all by Inessa Armand, Jacques Sadoul, and Jeanne Labourbe. In January 1919 Jeanne Labourbe, a former teacher, and several other foreign Communists had come to Odessa from Moscow and joined the "foreign collegium" set up by the underground regional Party committee. The collegium published a newspaper, *Le Communiste*, issued leaflets that were distributed among the occupation troops, and carried on propaganda. Together with the underground Bolshevik organisations it prepared a workers' insurrection involving French soldiers and sailors who supported the revolution, which was to coincide with the march of the Red Army on Odessa. In the night of 1 March 1919, however, ten of the underground activists, headed by Jeanne Labourbe, were seized by the French counterintelligence and shot after being tortured. The savage reprisals evoked a new

¹ Jacques Sadoul, *Notes sur la révolution bolchevique*, Editions de la Sirène, Paris, 1919, pp. 442, 457.

wave of unrest both among the French troops and in France itself.¹

In February soldiers of the 58th Infantry Regiment stationed in the Tiraspol area had already refused to take part in offensive actions; the command preferred to disarm them and send them home. On 8 March 1919 the 176th Regiment, landed in the Crimea, mutinied, and the soldiers fraternised with the Russian workers and Red Army-men. The French army lost its capacity to fight. The French commander-in-chief was forced to withdraw his troops from Odessa at the beginning of April.

There was also unrest among the sailors of the French fleet in the Black Sea. The signal for an uprising on the ships anchored in the Odessa Roads was to have been the action of the crew of the torpedo boat *Protée*, but the night before André Marty, one of the organisers, was arrested. Ton Duc Thang (subsequently a prominent leader of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam) took an active part in hoisting of the red flag on the cruiser *Waldeck Rousseau*. In April 1919 the crews of the battleships *France*, *Jean Bart*, and *Justice* mutinied and made a joint demonstration with the workers of Sevastopol, demanding immediate evacuation to France. On 29 April the Red Army entered Sevastopol.

The Clemenceau government tried to conceal the French sailors' actions and demands from the people, but in France itself, in the ports of Toulon, Cherbourg, and Brest, which were bases for supplying the intervention troops, demonstrations of workers, soldiers, and sailors developed into street fighting in June 1919. The disturbances were suppressed, but the French command was forced to evacuate the expeditionary corps from the south of Russia.²

In Italy workers stopped production of arms as a token of support for Soviet Russia, and railwaymen systematically prevented the dispatch of trains loaded with munitions for the counter-revolutionary armies fighting in Russia. Seamen and dockers blockaded ships with war cargoes in the ports: the *Fedora* in Genoa, the *Jipson* and *Nippon* in Naples, the *Perseus* in Spezzia.³ The Prime Minister, Francesco Nitti taking the mood of the broad masses into account cancelled the military expedition to Georgia that was being prepared.⁴

Britain's involvement in armed intervention caused increasing

¹ L.M. Zak, *They Represented the People of France. A Contribution to the History of French Internationalists, 1918-1920*, Moscow, 1977, pp. 18-32; A. Dunayevsky, *Jeanne Labourbe—Familiar and Unknown*, Moscow, 1976 (both in Russian).

² L.M. Zak, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-192.

³ K.V. Kobylyansky, *The October Revolution and the Revolutionary Movement in Italy*, Moscow, 1965 (in Russian); Pietro Secchia, *The Impact of the October Revolution on Italy*, Moscow, 1958 (translated into Russian).

⁴ U. Terracini, "The Italian Workers' Movement and the Great October Revolution", *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, No. 5, 1957, pp. 20-21.

mass protests of sailors and soldiers. In January 1919 the sailors of the battleship *Queen Elizabeth* refused to obey orders to sail to the Baltic. Soldiers of the expeditionary corps in Murmansk and on the Murmansk Railway mutinied. In March the British command in the north of Russia was forced to propose to the government the speediest evacuation of the troops. In the summer the crews of three British warships in the Baltic refused to obey orders.¹

In the spring of 1919 major British trade unions joined the active struggle against the anti-Soviet intervention. The conference of the Miners' Federation in March unanimously demanded immediate withdrawal of all British troops from Soviet Russia. A similar resolution was soon passed by the General Union of Textile Workers, the Locomotive Enginemen and Firemen, British Trades Union Congress, and the Amalgamated Engineering Union. On their initiative a special conference of the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party was convened on 3 April 1919, which called on the government "to take immediate steps to withdraw all British troops from Russia, and ... to induce the Allied Governments to do likewise".²

The revolutionary organisations of Great Britain were particularly active. In June 1919 the BSP moved a resolution at a Labour Party Conference that called on the Executive Committee to exert all the power of the organised labour movement, economic and political, to stop "intervention by the Allies in Russia". The resolution was carried against the Executive: 1,893,000 votes for and 935,000 against. A similar resolution was carried at the September TUC.³

The workers of the USA acted vigorously against foreign interference in the affairs of Soviet Russia. Officials, Congressmen, and newspapers received a host of letters. The Detroit papers published in February 1919 letters from soldiers in Archangel. "We are now fighting the Bolsheviks," wrote one of them, "but this is not being done with the aid of the Russian people. They are all plotting and working against us, with the exception of the capitalists, who are solely soliciting the aid of the allies. The Russian people consider the problem is for themselves to take care of, and we have no right to murder any of these Russians."⁴

A conference of workers' representatives in January 1919 unanimously demanded the withdrawal of American troops from the Land of Soviets. The resolution, which was endorsed by meetings and

¹ P.V. Gurovich, *The Upswing of the Labour Movement in Britain in 1918-1921*, Moscow, 1956, p. 75 (in Russian).

² *Report of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of the Labour Party*, The Labour Party, London, 1919, p. 26.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 156-161.

⁴ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 57, Part 5, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1919, p. 4735.

rallies of workers in various cities, said that nothing would deter them from demanding "Hands off Russia". On May 25 a thousands-strong meeting was held in New York under the watchword "Justice for Russia". Workers and longshoremen refused to load weapons. The League of Friends of Soviet Russia carried out a broad petition campaign calling for the withdrawal of American interventionist troops, an end to the economic blockade of Soviet Russia, and renunciation of support for the whiteguards.¹

In the summer of 1919 the Socialist Parties of Italy and France agreed on joint action in support of Soviet Russia and Soviet Hungary. At a meeting in Milan in which the Trade Union Confederations of both countries took part, it was decided to call a general international strike on July 21, involving primarily French, Italian, and British workers. The French CGT demanded demobilisation, a political amnesty, and restoration of constitutional freedoms, as well as cessation of armed intervention in Russia and Hungary, and granting to nations of the right to self-determination.² The Italian Socialist Party, the CGL, and the Union of Railwaymen said in their appeal to the workers: "By defending the socialist revolutions in the East, we ensure the possibility of a revolution in all of Europe, above all in Italy, whose development is running along the same lines."³ The Communist Workers' Party of Poland, reporting that the proletariat of the biggest countries of the Entente had decided to organise a great international revolutionary demonstration against the military intervention in Russia, declared that the working class would "not only ban the sending of soldiers to war against the Russian Revolution" but would also "not permit support for that war by shipments of weapons, ammunition, and money to the East", and that it would be a terrible disgrace if the proletariat of Poland did not join in this mass revolutionary protest.⁴

The leadership of the French CGT, however, rescinded its decision at the last moment, citing the government's appeal and the "apathy" of the workers, although the mass movement in the country had then reached a high level. The calling off of the strike was all the more regrettable since France had been the main organiser of the military campaign against Hungary. The Executive Committee of the British Labour Party also backed down, saying that the trade unions had been unable to hold the voting for it. Only in Italy

¹ I.M. Krasnov, *The Class Struggle in the USA and the Movement Against Anti-Soviet Intervention (1920-1922)*. Moscow, 1961, p. 209; *Progressive America in Struggle, 1917-1973. Documents and Materials*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 61-63, 66-69, 73-75 (both in Russian).

² *L'Humanité*, 5, 6 and 15 July 1919.

³ *Avanti!* (Milan), 7 July 1919.

⁴ *Proletarian Solidarity in the Fight for Peace (1917-1924)*, Moscow, 1958, pp. 122-23 (in Russian),

(though the Railwaymen's Union backed down) was the strike held with great success, affecting big centres like Turin, Genoa, Trieste, and Livorno.¹ The strike was held under the leadership of the Italian CGL and had the direct aim of stopping the sending of soldiers and munitions to Russia. The port workers of Holland, and workers in Austria, Poland, Norway, Romania, Yugoslavia, and other countries also went on strike. Lenin described the international strike as an experiment unprecedented in history. He did not consider its failure surprising, "...we also know that the working people of the leading and most civilised countries are on our side despite the European bourgeoisie's rabid hatred of us, that they understand our cause".²

Organised democratic opinion was stimulated into activity. In France the Republican Association of Ex-Servicemen (Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants), founded by young writers, expressed solidarity with Soviet Russia. In September 1919 the *Clarté* group of progressive writers published an appeal to the workers of the world, signed by Anatole France, Henri Barbusse, Paul Vaillant-Couturier, and others:

"Rise up, everybody, and brand the brutal and hypocritical coalition of reactionaries and big international bankers that is directed against the Russian Republic of Soviets.... Indifference on your part would turn you into accomplices of the counter-revolution. Do not bring down upon yourselves the disgrace of murdering the great freedom that belongs to all."³ Soon another appeal by 66 eminent men of science, the arts, and literature was published, which was highly appreciated by Lenin. At the same time the well-known bourgeois historian François-Alphonse Aulard protested in an open letter against the blockade and the lies about Soviet Russia. Romain Rolland raised his voice in defence of the Russian Revolution.⁴ The Socialist Party put Jacques Sadoul at the head of its list of candidates for the parliamentary elections in one of the Paris constituencies, but his election was prevented by the fact that a court martial had sentenced him to death, *in absentia*, for "desertion" and "relations with the enemy".⁵

The Scandinavian Workers' Congress held in December 1919 in Stockholm demanded restoration of trade with Soviet Russia by the governments of Sweden, Norway and Denmark, delivery of food

¹ For further details see K.V. Kobylansky, "The Solidarity Strike with Soviet Russia of 20-21 July 1919", *Russia and Italy*, Moscow, 1968 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "Speech at the First All-Russia Congress of Workers in Education and Socialist Culture, July 31, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 538.

³ *L'Humanité*, 9 September 1919.

⁴ *L'Humanité*, 26 October 1919; V.I. Lenin, "Seventh All-Russia Congress of Soviets", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 218, 222.

⁵ The accusation was only withdrawn in 1925.

and medical supplies, and barring of the despatch of troops there.

In Spain the organised working class put up resistance to the government, which was trying to join in the blockade of Soviet Russia. The congresses of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party and of the anarchosyndicalist National Confederation of Labour passed resolutions in December 1919 angrily condemning the government's decision.¹ The working class's action was supported by all democratic Spain. The support for and defence of the Soviet state by millions of workers in various parts of the world was of great significance. Lenin said of it: "The victory we won in compelling the evacuation of the British and French troops was the greatest of our victories over the Entente countries. We deprived them of their soldiers. Our response to the unlimited military and technical superiority of the Entente countries was to deprive them of it through the solidarity of the working people against the imperialist governments."² In January 1920 Great Britain, France, and Italy decided to lift the blockade of Soviet Russia.

A new wave of solidarity of European and other workers rose in the spring of 1920 when the Entente employed bourgeois-landowner Poland and Baron Wrangel (which Lenin described as "the two hands of the French imperialists") for a campaign against Soviet Russia, trying to strangle it.³ In the May Day demonstrations in Great Britain, the USA, France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Spain, Czechoslovakia, and other countries the columns marched past the buildings of the Polish missions and representations with banners reading "Long Live the Soviet Republic!", "Down with Poland!", "Down with Capitalism!". The demonstrations were sometimes accompanied with strikes. The workers of Warsaw and other Polish cities came out on the streets with anti-war slogans, in solidarity with Soviet Russia and the Soviet Ukraine.⁴

In Great Britain a "Hands Off Russia" Committee had already been set up on 7 November 1919, in which many leading members of the British working-class movement took part (A. A. Purcell, a member of the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC; W. P. Coates, Tom Mann, William Gallacher, and others). The Committee's programme went further than the demands of the Labour Party and TUC. In addition to withdrawal of British troops it called on the workers to fight for an end to aid of any kind for the whiteguard

¹ Manuel Tuñón de Lara, *La España del Siglo XX, 1914-1939*, Librería Española, Paris, 1973, pp. 92-94.

² V.I. Lenin, "Seventh All-Russia Congress of Soviets", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 211.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at a Congress of Leather Industry Workers, October 2, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 310.

⁴ *Proletarian Solidarity in the Fight for Peace*, pp. 150-158.

generals, for lifting of the economic blockade, and for the establishment of normal diplomatic and trade relations with the Soviet Republic.¹ When news of Polish troops' invasion of Soviet Russia came through, London dockers refused to load weapons for Poland onto the S. S. *Jolly George* on 10 May 1920, and unloaded the coal from its bunkers. A few days later a conference of the Dockers' Union called on the whole working class to oppose aid for Poland. The dockers were supported by the railwaymen. On June 1 a trainload of munitions for Pilsudski's troops was held up at King's Cross Station.² The National "Hands Off Russia" Committee called for the holding of a 24-hour strike. At the annual conference of the Labour Party the delegation of the British Socialist Party moved a resolution calling for a general strike; under pressure from the right wing, however, the conference rejected "direct action" and limited itself to sending a deputation to the Prime Minister.³

On August 3 the British Government demanded that the Soviet Republic stop its offensive against Warsaw, threatening otherwise to render Poland direct military aid. Curzon's ultimatum evoked a new outburst of indignation. Five days later hundreds of rallies and demonstrations took place throughout the country in answer to a call issued jointly by the newly-founded Communist Party (which had published an extensive action programme in the *Daily Herald*), the "Hands Off Russia" National Committee and Labour Party's Executive Committee. Their participants made it clear to the Government that if it unleashed a war against Soviet Russia this would trigger another war, a war by labour against capital, and that this war would end the first one. The *Labour Leader* noted that the whole labour movement was opposed to the government.⁴

On August 9 joint meeting of the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC, the Executive Committee of the Labour Party, and the Parliamentary Labour Party voted a resolution warning the government that "the whole industrial power of the organised workers will be used to defeat this war" (between the Allied powers and Soviet Russia—*Ed.*). The Council of Action was formed of representatives of the three organisations to coordinate the struggle. After Lloyd George rejected the working-class movement's demands, the Council convened in London a national conference of

¹ National "Hands Off Russia" Committee, *Peace with Russia. Organised Labour's Demand*, The National Labour Press Ltd., Manchester, 1920, pp. 1-2.

² P.V. Gurovich, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

³ *Report of the 20th Annual Conference of the Labour Party*, London, 1920, pp. 138, 144.

⁴ I. N. Undasynov, *Communists and the Labour Party. 1919-1923*, Moscow, 1979, pp. 125-126 (in Russian).

trade union executives and affiliated Labour socialist organisations, which decided "to resist any and every form of military and naval intervention against the Soviet Government of Russia". The Conference instructed the Council of Action to ensure:

"(1) An absolute guarantee that the armed forces of Great Britain shall not be used in support of Poland, Baron Wrangel, or any other military or naval effort against the Soviet Government.

"(2) The withdrawal of all British naval forces operating directly or indirectly as a blockading influence against Russia.

"(3) The recognition of the Russian Soviet Government and the establishment of unrestricted trading and commercial relationships between Great Britain and Russia."

The Council of Action was authorised by the Conference "to take any steps that may be necessary to give effect to the decisions of this Conference and the declared policy of the Trade Union and Labour Movement".¹

The threat of "direct action" played no small role in the government's decision to refrain from direct involvement in the anti-Soviet intervention. The working-class movement had won an important victory, which "showed what *could* be achieved by a *united* working class ready to *fight* for its demands by *militant* action, including the *strike* weapon on *political* as well as *economic* issues".²

Lenin, stressing the very close link between the upsurge of the working-class movement in the West and the Red Army's offensive, said at an All-Russia Conference of the RCP(B) on 22 September 1920: "Our presence at the walls of Warsaw has had, as another consequence, a powerful effect on the revolutionary movement in Europe, particularly in Britain. ...We have succeeded in influencing the British proletariat and in raising the movement there to an unprecedented level. ...When the British Government presented an ultimatum to us, it transpired that it would first have to consult the British workers."³

Protest actions also increased in Germany. On 8 May 1920 the Central Committee of the KPD appealed to the proletariat of Berlin to prevent the counter-revolutionary forces of Germany taking part in a new campaign against Soviet Russia: "Workers! Comrades! The revolutionary proletariat of all countries has the bounden duty to rise in defence of Soviet Russia. Soviet Russia asks nothing

¹ *The Labour Party. Report of the Executive Committee to the Twenty-First Annual Conference*, London, 1921, pp. 11-13.

² James Klugmann, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain*, Vol. 1, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1968, p. 87; I. N. Undasynov, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-28.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at the Ninth All-Russia Conference of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), September 22, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 276-77.

but the chance to build communism peaceably. The continued existence of Soviet Russia is not only preservation of the strongest stay and support of the coming proletarian revolution in Central and Western Europe. The opportunity of peaceful communist construction in Soviet Russia will open the prospect for the increasingly more pauperised working masses of Central and Western Europe of their own recovery from the economic chaos that the World War has left behind."¹

On July 2 the Communist Deputy Clara Zetkin spoke for the first time in the German Reichstag: "The first word of the Communists here is directed over the head of the House, and over the boundaries of Germany. It is an assurance of our commitment to international solidarity of the proletariat of all countries. ...It is especially an expression of grateful and admiring fraternity for Soviet Russia fighting the whole world and building socialism in the greatest difficulties." She called on all German workers not to permit transport of arms and ammunition to Poland.²

On July 22, when a ship with a war cargo for the Polish army arrived in Danzig, the German dockers refused to unload it, and picketed it in spite of the authorities' threats and subsequent promise of extrapay. Polish workers sent to unload it were not let onto the wharf. The ship left unloaded.³ Berlin railwaymen announced their determination, at a rally on July 27 in one of the biggest halls in the city, not to allow a single munitions train for Poland to move. Four days later there was a clash in Erfurt between railway workers, who were refusing to let a military train through, and French officers.⁴ In Stuttgart workers at the Daimler munitions factory smashed three armoured cars already loaded onto flatcars for despatch to Poland.

The mood of the workers was so determined that on 7 August 1920 all labour organisations—the General Association of German Trade Unions, and the Communist, Social-Democratic, and Independent Social-Democratic parties—issued a joint appeal, for the first time since the German November Revolution, for the workers to use every means to prevent the transport of munitions across Germany to Poland for the war against Soviet Russia launched by the Polish Government.⁵

On 20 August 1920 railwaymen at the Stettin Station in Berlin

¹ *Die Rote Fahne*, 9 May 1920.

² Clara Zetkin, *Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften*, Vol. 2, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1960, p. 195.

³ *Die Rote Fahne*, 24 July 1920.

⁴ *Die Rote Fahne*, 28 July 1920; 2 August 1920.

⁵ *Die Rote Fahne*, 8 August 1920.

refused to handle 23 freight cars with arms. The Danish S. S. *Cavalle* and the Greek S. S. *Iolanthe* which were being sent to Danzig with military supplies for Poland were held up in the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Kanal.¹ According to *Die Rote Fahne*, the workers of Danzig, which occupied a special geographic position, were in the vanguard not only of the German proletariat but of all West European workers. At the Danzig station, an aircraft destined for Poland was removed from the flatcar and smashed. The same day the Danzig General Association of Trade Unions resolved: "This meeting binds itself not to despatch from the area of the Free City any munitions that are intended for Poland."²

A wave of anti-war meetings and demonstrations swept France (Paris, Bordeaux, Strasbourg, Metz, and other cities). Everywhere the workers demanded an immediate ending of support for counter-revolutionary forces, and declared their solidarity with the workers of the Land of Soviets. The Socialist Party (SFIO) issued a call for peace with Soviet Russia and its diplomatic recognition: "For nearly three [years], the capitalist Governments of the Entente have multiplied villainous efforts to destroy the Soviet regime and restore a political and social set-up in Russia that suits them. ... The Russian Revolution has put itself at the service of the proletariat of both hemispheres... Fight for it! Peace for Soviet Russia".³

The workers of Italy were also making a palpable contribution to defence of the Soviet Republic at that time. In May and June 1920 Italian railwaymen held up several transports with war cargoes for Poland. The strike begun by railwaymen in Cremona, who were protesting against despatch of a train with munitions for Poland, developed into a huge political demonstration of solidarity with Soviet Russia. Powerful demonstrations demanding peace with Soviet Russia were held at the end of August, which spread from the towns to rural areas.

Fraternal support for the workers and peasants of Soviet Russia was shown by the working people of Austria and Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak Government, frightened by the concerted actions, especially those of the railwaymen, declared its neutrality in the war between Poland and Soviet Russia. The workers of Bulgaria rose in defence of Soviet Russia, and much work was done by the Bulgarian Communist Party to consolidate the country's patriotic forces. On its initiative the transport workers' union appealed to all transport workers on 1 September 1920 to join the interna-

¹ *Die Rote Fahne*, 11 September 1920.

² *Die Rote Fahne*, 15 August 1920.

³ *L'Humanité*, 11 August 1920.

tional solidarity movement and to refuse to move war cargoes of any kind for Wrangel and Poland.¹

Evidence of the mass character of this movement was the appeal of the International Federation of Trade Unions (the Amsterdam International) to the workers of the world. It declared: "In view of the fact that Poland has attacked the Russian Revolution, the International Federation of Trade Unions demands that all counter-revolutionary military operations against Russia be stopped immediately and also that the Russian people be given a guarantee against further acts of aggression." The message called upon all union-organised workers to refrain from giving assistance to the imperialists. "For the salvation of mankind, workers' action must foil the attempts to revive the reactionary 'Holy Alliance'. Not a single trainload of arms or a single ship carrying munitions must pass, and not a single soldier transported. An end must be put to feeding the war." The message also recommended measures to stop arms manufacture in all countries.²

Labour organisations in the United States developed an active struggle against the new offensive of the imperialist powers. Workers in Chicago and Seattle threatened to strike if the US Administration did not stop helping Poland. The Chicago Federation of Labor called on the AFL to convene a national conference of solidarity with the Russian proletariat, in order to keep the government from direct intervention and to demand that the Russian people be let alone to work out their own problems. The newspapers were full of reports of meetings, demonstrations, and protest resolutions against the criminal actions of imperialism, and expressions of readiness to oppose the sending of soldiers and munitions for Pilsudski's army.³

Japanese Socialist emigrants living in the USA, headed by Sen Katayama, protested in determined fashion against the imperialist powers' military intervention in Russia. "We must defend this revolution," Sen Katayama wrote, "not only for Russia but for the cause of the proletariat of all lands." Committees against interference in the affairs of Soviet Russia (*Tairo hikansho*) were set up in many Japanese cities on the initiative of the trade unions, Communists, and leftist groups, which were similar to the "Hands Off Russia" movement in Europe, and embraced various social strata and organisations (trade unions, political and religious leaders,

¹ *Proletarian Solidarity in the Fight for Peace*, pp. 226-229.]

² *L'Humanité*, 23 August 1920.

³ V.L. Malkov, "The October Revolution and the Labour Movement of the USA (1917-1922)". In: *The American Yearbook*. 1978, Moscow, 1978, pp. 35-36 (in Russian).

scientists, journalists, Socialists, Communists, anarchists, and youth organisations). In the first May Day demonstration held in Japan, in 1920, there were demands for the immediate withdrawal of Japanese troops from the Soviet Far East, as well as calls for the introduction of an eight-hour day, elimination of unemployment, the establishment of a guaranteed minimum wage, and repeal of the law on maintenance of social peace. Sato Michio (or Asado san as he was called in the Far East), who had joined a guerrilla detachment, distributed anti-war leaflets and literature of the Communist Party of Japan among the soldiers at the risk of his life, and made no small contribution to demoralisation of the army. In June 1922, on the initiative of Japanese Communists and trade unions, the committees against interference in Russian affairs united into a national organisation, the League for Non-Intervention in the Affairs of Russia (*Tairo hikansho domei*), which put the movement for the withdrawal of Japanese troops from Russia, and for recognition of the Soviet Government, on a broader, more organised, basis.¹

The powerful movement in support of Soviet Russia, that developed in many countries, merging with the heroic struggle of its workers and peasants against internal counter-revolution and foreign military intervention, upset the aggressive intentions of imperialist circles. The "Hands Off Russia" movement contributed enormously to Soviet Russia's finally getting the chance (having won convincing victories on the civil war fronts, defeated the interventionist troops at Archangel and Murmansk, in Siberia, and in the South, and inflicted crushing blows on Poland and Wrangel) to start peaceful construction and restoration of its shattered economy.

In explaining how it happened that "devastated, weak and backward Soviet Russia" could defeat the alliance of much more powerful capitalist states, Lenin said that their governments "lack strength at home, and the workers, the working people in general, are against them".² Earlier still he had said: "First, we won the workers and peasants away from Britain, France and America. These troops could not fight against us. Secondly, we won away from them... small countries," which took a stand of friendly neutrality. Third, the bourgeois intellectuals were won over, and came out decidedly for stopping intervention. "We have gained three tremendous victories over the Entente, and they were not only military victories." These victories, he concluded, "will make it possible in the future to

¹ D. I. Goldberg, "The Fight of Japanese Internationalists in Defence of Soviet Russia", *Narody Azii i Afriki*, No. 2, 1974, pp. 57-67.

² V.I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at a Conference of Chairmen of Uyezds, Volost and Village Executive Committees of Moscow Gubernia, October 15, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 329.

gain much greater sympathy by peaceful means".¹

The lessons of the civil war in Russia were and are of great international importance.² They showed, above all, that no internal counter-revolution can break the people's power when it is genuinely the power of the working people, led by the working class, when this government trusts the masses, relies on the masses, and unconditionally defends their interests, and when it is ready to do everything necessary for its highest aim, defence of the revolution.

These lessons indicated the quite limited character of imperialism's opportunities and interventionist policy. The export of counter-revolution, the use of foreign armed forces to hold down nations fighting for their freedom is, of course, a terrible, dangerous weapon of imperialism, but when a nation is firmly resolved to win, and when the party leading its struggle pursues a correct line and has a truly revolutionary strategy and tactics, and when, finally, this nation has the internationalist solidarity of the workers of all lands on its side, then imperialism proves powerless.

The civil war and intervention in Russia clearly demonstrated the integral connection of the class struggle in all lands, and especially the very close ties of the victorious proletarian revolution with the struggle of the proletariat in capitalist countries. The scale of the movement of solidarity with Soviet Russia was largely due to the fact that the masses in the West understood that what was happening in Russia, helped them in their fight against their own capitalists and that the Soviet Government was battling as well for their class interests.

The fact that the civil war in Russia, in spite of the exceptional difficulty of the situation, was accompanied with an unprecedented rise in the activity of the broad masses themselves, with their self-sacrificing participation in military, political, economic, and cultural activity, and in building the new society, played an enormous role. It was the most important source of the Soviet Government's strength on the home front and at the same time of its growing international influence. In Lenin's words, "A nation in which the majority of the workers and peasants realise, feel and see that they are fighting for their own Soviet power, for the rule of the working people, for the cause whose victory will ensure them and their children all the benefits of culture, of all that has been created by human labour—such a nation can never be vanquished."³

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Seventh All-Russia Congress of Soviets", *Collected Works*. Vol. 30, pp. 216-22.

² *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Moscow, 1979, pp. 293-94 (in Russian).

³ V.I. Lenin, "Speech at a Meeting of the Railwaymen of Moscow Junction, April 16, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 319.

Chapter 7

THE REVOLUTIONARY VANGUARD AND THE MASSES

THE CHANGE IN THE ALIGNMENT OF FORCES IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

In the bitter class battles of 1918-19 the capitalists had been able to defeat the working class and break up its advanced contingents, but the will of the proletariat, which had risen in struggle for its vital rights, was not broken. The revolutionary movement continued to grow in a number of countries in 1920, and the strike struggle broadened; in other countries the working class more or less successfully repulsed the reactionary forces' attempts to deprive it of its hard-won gains. Everywhere in the labour movement, even though by different roads and at different rates, demarcation between revolutionaries and reformists continued.

In *Germany*, the Communists continued a stubborn struggle in spite of the death of many members and harsh persecution. The party, driven underground, with difficulty surmounted the "leftist" mistakes of its founding congress on the issues of participation in parliamentary elections and work in reformist trade unions. Such work was all the more necessary because the membership of the unions affiliated to the reformist General Commission of Trade Unions had almost doubled by the summer of 1919, compared with prewar years, and had reached 4,860,000. The Nuremberg Congress of Trade Unions founded a centralised organisation, the General Association of German Trade Unions, which was headed by Carl Legien. The congress, taking the mounting activity of the masses into account, and adapting itself to the circumstances, put forward a demand for "industrial democracy", which was to be exercised by production councils (works' committees) jointly with the employers, and was to serve as "important preparation for socialism".¹

The Second Congress of the Communist Party of Germany, which met illegally in October 1919, adopted theses on communist prin-

¹ L. Berthold, K.H. Biernat, A. Laschitzka *et al.* (Eds.), *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Chronik*, Part 2, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1966, pp. 70-71.

ciples and tactics aimed against the "Lefts" and based on the assumption that the social revolution could not be made by a violent assault. The theses said: "The revolution, which is not a one and for all blow but the long, hard struggle of a class suppressed for a thousand years and for that reason not fully conscious at once of its task and its strength, is exposed to a rise and fall, and an ebb and flow. It changes its means according to the situation, it attacks capitalism sometimes on the political flank, sometimes on the economic one, and sometimes on both. The KPD fights the idea that an economic revolution redeems a political one."¹

The congress also adopted theses on the need to work in parliaments and reformist trade unions. The 18 delegates (out of 49) voting against were debarred from participation in the rest of the congress. The expulsion of the "left" opposition without adequate ideological explanation of the error of their stand led to the withdrawal of several big proletarian area organisations from the party, including those of Berlin, Dresden, and the north and north-west. Lenin's proposal for mediation by the Executive Committee of the Comintern to heal the split was not accepted.² The Third Congress of the KPD in February 1920 confirmed the expulsion; as a result the party lost more than a third of its members. The Hamburg "Lefts", led by Heinrich Laufenberg and Fritz Wolffheim, who had slid into an anarchosyndicalist position, soon founded an ultra-left Communist Labour Party of Germany (KAPD).³

A grave inner-party struggle also flared up in the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany. Kautsky, Bernstein, Haase, and others, who were actively involved in reviving the Second International, tried to get the party to follow them, but the revolutionary workers and a considerable part of the leadership, now freed from the influence of opportunist leaders, more and more resolutely demanded changes of programme and tactics, and affiliation to the Communist International. An Extraordinary Congress of the USPD in Leipzig, at the end of 1919 unanimously adopted an action programme which was in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat and a system of workers' Councils (an analogy to the Soviets in Russia). A majority resolution demanded that the party break with the Second International and expressed agreement with the principles of the Comintern. The centrist leaders, how-

¹ *Bericht über den 2. Parteitag der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (Spartakusbund) vom 20. bis 24. Oktober 1919*, Berlin, p. 61.

² V.I. Lenin, "Letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany Regarding the Split"; "To the Communist Comrades Who Belonged to the United 'Communist Party of Germany' and Have Now Formed a New Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 87-90.

³ Walter Ulbricht, Horst Bartel *et al.* (Eds.), *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 3, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1966, pp. 259-64.

ever, managed to postpone decision on affiliation to the Comintern until consultations with the French Socialists.¹

At that time the German workers had again intensified their fight for recognition of the rights of their representatives in enterprises. The production councils doggedly defended their existence. Many of them openly opposed the employers, disputed their sole authority, and demanded the establishment of workers' control over production. They were the antipode of the trade union bureaucracy, which had signed an agreement on "business co-operation" with the monopolists, and strove to break down the craft principle of trade union organisation, and to unite all the workers and employees and technical staff of an enterprise. They laid claim to a decisive role in the reorganisation of production and distribution, even beyond the limits of separate enterprises, considered themselves agencies of direct industrial democracy, and sometimes came out for their own implementation of "socialisation".

The government introduced a bill on production councils in the National Assembly, but the employers considered it dangerous to grant them even a very limited influence on matters of hiring and firing, organisation of production, safety, etc. On their insistence the bill was even further watered down and reduced the activity of production councils to keeping production "economic" and preventing "upheavals", i.e. strikes and other protest actions.

The Central Council of production councils, jointly with the leadership of the KPD and the USPD, called for a protest against conversion of the revolutionary bodies that had arisen during the November Revolution into "slavedrivers in the employers' service", and demanded the granting of full right of control and participation in the management of enterprises to the workers. On 13 January 1920 a thousand-strong demonstration was held in front of the Reichstag Building. Troops opened fire on the unarmed workers, killing 42 and wounding 105. A state of emergency was proclaimed in Berlin and several other areas, and the newspapers of the KPD and USPD were closed.²

In March 1920 the political situation in Germany deteriorated sharply. Reactionary monarchist circles, relying on armed white-guard units, tried to seize power by a military putsch led by Wolfgang Kapp, a big Prussian landowner, and General Walter von Lüttwitz. The Social-Democratic leaders—Friedrich Ebert, the President of the Republic, and members of Bauer's government—were on the brink of capitulation, but the worker masses, who understood that victory of the putschists would deprive them of everything they

¹ USPD. *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des ausserordentlichen Parteitages in Leipzig vom 30. November bis 6. Dezember 1919*, Berlin, 1920.

² Walter Ulbricht et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 262-63.

had managed to win and keep through eighteen months of stubborn revolutionary battles, rose in concerted, united defence of the republican system and democratic rights. The general strike called by the trade unions embraced the whole country, and became the most massive one in the whole history of Germany, involving 12 million persons.¹

The Central Committee of the KPD recognised, after some wavering, that in the existing conditions, when the premises for direct establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat did not exist, the job was to unite all the democratic forces to crush reaction. It declared that if a government of representatives of labour organisations were formed, that would defend the interests of the working people, the Communists were ready to pursue a policy of "loyal opposition" to it.² This approach was approved by Lenin, who called the Kapp putsch the "German Kornilov revolt".³

As a result of the proletarian masses' unprecedented upsurge of activity and the unity of action of all contingents of the working class that took shape, supported by the mass democratic organisations and leading members of the public, the mutineers were forced to give in. The putsch failed on the third day. But the right-wing Social-Democratic and union leaders, recovering from their fright, took part in the actions of reactionary capitalist circles and the Reichswehr to isolate and defeat the revolutionary vanguard. The Red Army of the Ruhr, formed by the workers under the leadership of Communists and Left Independents, which numbered around 100,000 fighters, armed with machine-guns and artillery, and which had purged the whole industrial area of counter-revolutionaries, was forced to surrender its weapons at the beginning of April. Real workers' power was not formed in Germany, nevertheless the unanimous rebuff to reaction, and the spontaneously formed unity of action of all the working people and democratic forces, left a deep trace on history.

A rallying of revolutionary forces that were leaning towards a Communist stand continued in the labour movement of *France*. The attempt of left groups of an anarchosyndicalist hue to found a Communist Party outside the Socialists' organisations and trade unions got no response, of course. Meanwhile the influence of supporters of the Third International within the French Section of

¹ For fuller details see: *Arbeiterklasse siegt über Kapp und Lüttwitz*, Vols. 1-2, Akad.-Verlag, Berlin, 1971; E. Könnemann, H.J. Krusch, *Aktionseinheit contra Kapp-Putsch*, Berlin, 1972.

² Walter Ulbricht *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 266-85; see also *A History of Germany*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1970, pp. 68-89 (in Russian).

³ V.I. Lenin, "Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 109-11.

the Labour International (SFIO) markedly increased. The intention of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany to leave the Second International made a considerable impression. The regular 17th Congress of the SFIO, held in Strasbourg in February 1920, was to decide its policy.

As Lenin warned the French supporters of the Comintern, they could expect a tough fight with opportunism, "especially with the very refined opportunists of the Longuet type".¹ In fact, the centrist supporters of a "reconstruction" of the Second International, taking account of the earlier voting in the local federations, came out for the Party's withdrawal. Their resolution received 4,330 votes, with 337 against. It said that the thesis of the dictatorship of the proletariat, intended to ensure the transition from capitalist to socialist society, underlies any revolutionary concept, and the establishment of the workers' Councils is, evidently, one of the most effective ways towards worker power.

In spite of the verbal admissions, however, the centrists (by 3,031 votes against 1,621) prevented the party's immediate joining of the Comintern. The leadership was instructed to start preliminary negotiations with other socialist parties and Moscow.²

A new wave of strikes arose in France; although they were fewer in 1920 than in the preceding year, the number of strikers rose to 1,347,000, while the number of man-days involved was 50 per cent greater and exceeded 23 million.³ The struggle had a militant, aggressive character, and was better organised. At the beginning of the year, and in March and April, steel workers, miners, builders, and textile workers went on strike, rejecting all the capitalists' and reformists' attempts to establish "civic peace". The railwaymen were soon in the forefront of the struggle. In February a strike began on the Paris-Lion-Marseilles line. Work stopped in solidarity on other lines, so that more than 300,000 men were soon on strike, which was more than two-thirds of the employees of the railways. The Left Socialists and revolutionary syndicalists tried to get the SFIO to support this powerful action, during which a demand was made for nationalisation of the railways. But Léon Jouhaux and M. Bidegaray, the secretary of the National Federation of Railway Workers, yielded to the employers' pressure and agreed at the beginning of March to call off the strike without concessions

¹ V.I. Lenin, "To Comrade Lorient and All the French Friends Who Adhered to the Third International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 85.

² L.P. Kozhevnikova, *The Labour and Socialist Movement in France in 1917-1920*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 184, 192-98; Z.V. Chernukha, *The Founding of the French Communist Party*, Moscow, 1976, pp. 34, 40-41 (both in Russian).

³ *Annuaire statistique. Cinquante-huitième volume 1951*, Imprimerie Nationale, Paris, 1952, p. 102.

from the employers. Their action evoked general dissatisfaction among the railwaymen; their Federation's congress, held on 21-24 April 1920, rejected the report of the reformist leadership, elected a new federal council headed by the revolutionary syndicalist Gaston Monmousseau and L. Midol, and decided to call a general strike on May 1.

The May Day strike took on the character of a protest against the policy of the government, which was egging Poland on against the Soviet Russia, and against the rise in the cost of living. Demands were made for a reduction of the army, and release of political prisoners. The demonstration in Paris, where three-quarters of the workers struck work, led to violent clashes. The whole country's transport was paralysed. The government resorted to repression. The workers of the state railways were declared conscripted, the revolutionary leadership was arrested and accused of conspiracy against internal and external security. The leaders of the CGT, forced to reckon with the workers' mood, agreed to support the railwaymen's strike with the solidarity actions of the miners and seamen, dockers and metal workers, builders and electricians, gas workers and furniture workers. But the "wave tactics" recommended by the CGT—short actions following one after the other—proved ineffective, and in general the CGT leadership left the railwaymen without support after May 22. The struggle was called off only on May 29, separate groups holding out until June 2.

The May strike, in which nearly 1,500,000 French workers took part, was defeated. More than 22,000 men lost their jobs, and many families were evicted from their homes. The employers passed to a general counteroffensive, and stopped observing the laws on the eight-hour day, collective bargaining, and trade union rights. Membership of the CGT and the Railwaymen's Federation fell steeply. The strike's defeat meant collapse of anarchosyndicalism's doctrine of the universally decisive role of the general strike, and had shown the workers that they could not beat the capitalists, who possessed all the means of power, simply by that road. The need to find new forms of trade union and political organisation became obvious. The May strike, which was the culmination of the postwar strike movement in France, had a big effect on the regrouping of forces in the SFIO and CGT, and accelerated the differentiation of revolutionary and reformist elements.

Industrial Turin again became the centre of the revolutionary struggle in *Italy* in the spring of 1920. Factory commissions and councils were actively operating there in most big plants; the L'Ordine Nuovo group of Left Socialists saw them as the embryo of revolutionary power. When the industrialists tried to eliminate these organisations the workers of the FIAT-Centro factories answered

on 13 April 1920 with an "Italian" strike, i. e. having gone to their work places, they refused to start work. The engineering employers' association declared a lockout. The authorities brought 50,000 troops into the city and surrounding area. But the strike gripped all Turin and spread to Piedmont, drawing up to half-a-million workers in various industries and agriculture into its orbit.

This was the most powerful action of the Italian proletariat in the first postwar years, and could have become the starting point for the spread and development of factory councils as strongholds in the proletariat's struggle for power, but the leadership of the Italian Socialist Party did not encourage transformation of this strike into a national one. Furthermore, it branded the Turin mass movement for factory councils as "anarchosyndicalism", while Gramsci's group was reproached with "indiscipline" for having displayed initiative. The reformist leader of the CGL Ludovico D'Aragona cynically called "to bury the stillborn child".¹ The general strike in Turin lasted ten days, and the engineering workers' strike for a month. It did not lead to unity of action of the working class over the whole country and ended in the employers' recognising only limited rights for the factory councils. But it had national repercussions and led to the setting up of such councils in other Italian cities.

Gramsci had already written a report on the Turin Section of the Socialist Party in the first days of the strike, and sent it to a meeting of the Party's National Council in Milan, published under the title "Towards a Renewal of the Socialist Party". It proposed the forming of "communist groups in all factories, unions, co-operatives and barracks which will ... organise the setting-up of factory councils to exercise control over industrial and agricultural production". He suggested that they would become "the trusted elements whom the masses will delegate to form political Soviets and exercise the proletarian dictatorship".

Gramsci thus expressed the very important idea that "the existence of a cohesive and highly disciplined communist party with factory, trade-union and co-operative cells, that can co-ordinate and centralize in its central executive committee the whole of the proletariat's revolutionary action, is the fundamental and indispensable condition for attempting any experiments with Soviets." If the condition is lacking, Gramsci said, any suggestion of this kind must be rejected as absurd and benefiting only those who try to

¹ Paolo Spriano, *Storia del Partito comunista italiano*, Vol. 1, Giulio Einaudi editore, Turin, 1967, p. 52; Giorgio Candeloro, *Il movimento sindacale in Italia*, Edizione di cultura sociale, Rome, 1950, pp. 106-107; Luigi Longo-Carlo Salinari, *Tra reazione e rivoluzione*, Edizioni del Calendario, Milan, 1972, pp. 72-73.

discredit the idea of the Soviets. "The Socialist Party should embody the vigilant revolutionary consciousness of the whole of the exploited class". But neither its leadership nor its organ *Avanti!* had even begun a polemic with the reformists and opportunists; and "the Party has played no part in the international movement". His analysis, he said, "indicated the kind of effort at renewal and organization which we hold to be indispensable".¹

The majority of the leadership of the Italian Socialist Party, however, whose membership had trebled that year and reached 216,000,² were unable to apprehend either Gramsci's criticism then or his practical proposals. Even Angelo Tasca and Umberto Terracini, members of the L'Ordine Nuovo group, withdrew the draft resolution they had moved, which called for strengthening of the struggle for Soviets and the principles of the Third International. At Milan the draft was supported only by F. Misiano.³

Meanwhile, Gramsci's report contained an important warning whose justice was only later appreciated: "The present phase of the class struggle in Italy is the phase that precedes: either the conquest of political power on the part of the revolutionary proletariat and the transition to new modes of production and distribution that will set the stage for a recovery in productivity—or a tremendous reaction on the part of the propertied classes and governing caste. No violence will be spared in subjecting the industrial and agricultural proletariat to servile labour; there will be a bid to smash once and for all the working class's organs of political struggle (the Socialist Party) and to incorporate its organs of economic resistance (the trade unions and co-operatives) into the machinery of the bourgeois State."⁴

In *Great Britain* the strike struggle had a clearly marked offensive character in 1920, as in the preceding years. The workers continued to win pay rises, shorter hours, and improvements in working conditions. As before the miners were in the forefront of the movement, demanding as well nationalisation of the coal mines. During the year 1,932,000 workers took part in 1,607 strikes; the number of mandays lost was over 26 million.⁵ As in 1919 most of the strikes ended in full or partial victory for the workers; as a result 7,900,000 workers won pay increases, and 560,000 a shorter working day.⁶

The first British workers' delegation arrived in Soviet Russia

¹ Antonio Gramsci, *Selected Political Writings (1910-1920)*, Translated by John Mathews, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1977, pp. 191-95.

² *Communist Party of Italy: Thirty Years of Struggle*, Moscow, 1953, p. 54 (in Russian).

³ *Avanti!*, 22 April 1920.

⁴ Antonio Gramsci, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

⁵ *18th Abstract of Labour Statistics*, HMSO, London, 1927, pp. 144-45.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 121-29.

in the spring of 1920, and was received on May 26 by Lenin, who gave it an open letter to British workers, in which he frankly said that certain influential reformist leaders' joining of the Comintern would only harm the proletariat's revolutionary movement.¹ On its return the delegation spoke about its impressions with enthusiasm, though the Land of Soviets was then suffering from exceptional difficulties, made the worse by Poland's attack. Great Britain was not the least of the powers that were aiding Poland. The British philosopher Bertrand Russell, who had then also met Lenin, wrote: "I believe that the heroism of Russia has fired men's hopes in a way which was essential to the realization of Communism in the future... Bolshevism deserves the gratitude and admiration of all the progressive part of mankind."²

At the same time, however, when the powerful "Hands Off Russia" movement had developed in Britain, separate sections of the British labour movement were also acting in defence of the national demands of Ireland. In July 1920 the TUC voted for the demand of "Peace for Ireland! Hands Off Ireland!" But the Labour leaders, exploiting the deeply rooted chauvinist tradition fostered for centuries by the British bourgeoisie, and low development of proletarian internationalism, were able to hold the broad masses of the organised workers back from rendering effective aid to the struggling Irish people.

In the *United States* the workers continued their stubborn struggle to improve working and living conditions. In 1920 the strike wave, though not as high as in the preceding year, remained considerable; 1,460,000 workers took part in 3,411 disputes.³

The upswing of the American proletariat's class struggle wrecked the capitalists' hopes that they would manage to win lengthy "class peace". At the same time the weakness of the American labour movement was clearly displayed. Although membership of the trade unions continued to grow and rose from 3.5 million in 1918 to five million in 1920 (four million belonged to the AFL), the conservative union leadership put the brakes on direct struggle for the workers' economic interests, preferring to do deals with the employers behind the scenes, and vigorously opposing the spread of socialist ideas among the workers, participation of the proletariat in political actions, and the building of a mass political labour party. That complicated the American workers' fight for their vital inter-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Letter to the British Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 139-43.

² Bertrand Russell, *The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism*, Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1920, p. 6.

³ *Historical Statistics of the United States, 1789-1945*, Govt. Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1949, p. 73.

ests and blocked their solidarity actions with the proletariat of Europe.¹

The Communists, who were still underground, advanced toward the establishment of organisational unity, relying on the political aid of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, and developed broad discussion of problems of party policy. In May 1920 the Communist Labour Party of America and part of the Communist Party of America formed a United Communist Party at a convention in Bridgeman, but the split was only finally overcome a year later.

When Lenin analysed the state of the labour movement in a number of European countries and the USA at the beginning of 1920, he noted with satisfaction the advance of the revolutionary forces. The young Communist parties of Germany and Austria were tackling the task of winning the advanced sections of the proletariat over to their side in very difficult conditions. The approach of several large Socialist parties in Europe, including the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, and the Socialist parties of France and Italy, toward the Comintern was undoubted evidence of growth of the influence of communist ideas. But Lenin, more clearly than anyone else, also saw the big danger that this rapprochement harboured.

A whole number of reformists, above all the centrist leaders, adapting themselves to the shift in the workers' mood, began to use revolutionary phraseology broadly. Some, so as to retain their authority and influence, even expressed a readiness to join the Comintern on certain conditions. Lenin therefore considered it dangerous for the labour movement in the West that certain prominent opportunist leaders had found a way out in a purely "verbal recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet government".² But it was impermissible to turn the dictatorship of the proletariat into some sort of icon. "An icon is something you pray to, something you cross yourself before, something you bow down to; but an icon has no effect on practical life and practical politics."³ To recognise the dictatorship of the proletariat did not in the least mean, of course, "undertaking an assault, an uprising, at all costs and at any moment. That is nonsense. A successful insurrection demands prolonged, skilful and persistent preparations, preparations entailing great sacrifice."⁴ But it did mean drawing a determined and conscious line of demarcation against people like Kautsky and

¹ *History of the Labour Movement in the USA in Recent Times*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1970, pp. 45-46 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "A Publicist's Notes", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 354.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 356.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

Hilferding in Germany, Bauer and F. Adler in Austria, Longuet in France, Turati in Italy, and MacDonald in Britain.¹

Certain centrist groups and their leaders, leaning toward the Comintern, counted on joining it in the hope that they would manage, without breaking with reformist ideology and policies, to get the policy of the Comintern and Communist parties clearly defined by a certain "middle line". Penetration of the communist movement, just taking shape, by such opportunist views threatened to disrupt its ideological and theoretical basis, and to undermine its revolutionary spirit. It was necessary to block that danger while drawing all the really revolutionary elements in the centrist parties over to communism.

The drawing of a line against social reformism had only just been put on the agenda in several countries, and proletarian revolutionaries counted on the support of the Comintern and the already formed Communist parties in this struggle. In other words the task of overcoming opportunism ideologically and politically remained a precondition for forming the revolutionary vanguard for the whole communist movement.

In so far as revolutionaries failed to break *simultaneously* with opportunism and to lead the masses to a victorious assault on capitalism, it was inevitable that there would be two stages, two steps that the communist movement would have to take consecutively, one after the other. The first was to *win the vanguard*, and separate it ideologically and organisationally from the collaborators. Where the nucleus of a communist organisation had already taken shape or was being formed, the job of the first stage had already been successfully done. "That is the main thing," Lenin thought. "Without this, not even the first step towards victory can be made." But, he added, it is "still quite a long way from victory."²

The second stage was *winning the masses*. That job was still outstanding in all European countries (let alone elsewhere), but the vanguard itself was not yet even fully aware of it. Lenin therefore particularly stressed that "victory cannot be won with a vanguard alone. To throw only the vanguard into the decisive battle," he said, "would be, not merely foolish but criminal."³

While the main thing in tackling the problems of the first stage, that is, dissociation, was an ideological and practical, political confrontation of two platforms (the dictatorship of the proletariat and bourgeois democracy; the Soviets and bourgeois parliamentarism), more than just propaganda, and sometimes long rev-

¹ V. T. Lenin, "A Publicist's Notes", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 358.

² V.I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 92.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

olutionary practice, was needed for the second stage, the winning over of the masses. These two stages, moreover, were not strictly delimited in time, because completion of the forming of Communist parties had coincided in some countries with development of their struggle for the masses.

When Lenin was characterising the essence of the second stage he explained that "for an entire class, the broad masses of the working people, those oppressed by capital" to pass to a position "either of direct support for the vanguard, or at least sympathetic neutrality towards it and of precluded support for the enemy", "the masses must have their own political experience".¹ Communist parties therefore had to master the ability "to *lead* the broad masses (who are still, for the most part, apathetic, inert, dormant and convention-ridden)", to the stand of the revolutionary vanguard, and must learn how "to lead, *not only* their own party but also these masses".²

It was a task of enormous complexity. While the Communist parties of the capitalist countries of Europe and the USA had a little more than 400,000 members in the spring of 1920, the Social-Democratic and Socialist parties had more than 8,500,000. The dynamics of the balance of forces, however, was more important, and indicated the possibility of coping with the tasks facing them. In some of the major Socialist parties, which had more than 1,700,000 members, there were stormy discussions, and they were gradually moving from right to left, from the Second International to the Third (see Table 2).

The problem of the masses was not reducible to the position of workers' parties. The most mass labour organisations were the *trade unions*. In the early postwar years they grew rapidly in all countries. The workers, the unskilled included, felt an acute need for organisations that would directly defend their interests in the field of work, and trade unions had shown their capacity to fight for better working conditions and higher wages. Some went even further, calling for reforms and raising the masses to fight the cost of living and rise of prices, to fight for the introduction of worker control, and even to establish "a new social system".

Most trade unions—around two-thirds—were under the influence of Social-Democracy in 1920, if we arbitrarily include the American AFL in this group. In France nearly 90 per cent of the organised workers were in such unions, in the USA 84 per cent, in Great Britain around 80 per cent, in Germany nearly 75 per cent, in Italy 70 per cent. The rest of the organised workers belonged (a) to "neutral"

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

² *Ibid.*

Table 2

Labour Parties in 1920
(Membership in thousands)

Country	Communist Parties	Vacillating Parties	Social-Democratic and Socialist Parties
Great Britain	5	ILP 35	4,257
Germany	79	USPD 894	1,180
France		SFIO 200	
Italy		PSI 200	
Belgium			600
Austria	10*		490
Netherlands	4		
Spain	8	PSOE 42	
Sweden	Left SDP 23*		143
Norway	Labour Party 110		
Finland	40**		67
Switzerland		SPS 54**	
Czechoslovakia		SDP 360**	
Bulgaria	38		18**
Yugoslavia	SLPY/k/65		
USA	CLPA, CPA 14		27

* Figures for 1919.

** Figures for 1921/22.

Sources: *Ezhegodnik Komintern*, Petrograd/Moscow, 1923, pp. 54-55; *The Second Congress of the Comintern. The Elaboration of Ideological, Tactical and Organisational Principles of Communist Parties*, Moscow, 1972, pp. 45, 50, 90-92 (in Russian).

unions, which had the following membership—1,850,000 in Great Britain, 1,350,000 in Germany, 815,000 in the USA, 250,000 in Italy; (b) to Christian trade unions (between 1,000,000 and 1,700,000 members in Germany, 1,000,000 to 1,200,000 in Italy, more than 300,000 in Hungary, 200,000 to 225,000 in Belgium, 190,000 to 200,000 in Holland, 160,000 in Spain, 125,000 to 140,000 in France); and (c) to bourgeois-liberal unions (660,000 in Germany, 640,000 in Poland, 350,000 in Czechoslovakia).¹ But even in Europe and the USA, which had at least 95 per cent of the organised workers of the capitalist world, more than half the wage-earners were outside unions (see Table 3).

Since the proletarian masses most active socially were under the leadership or influence of Social-Democratic Party and trade union leaders, the job facing Communists, of winning the masses for revo-

¹ Estimated from the data in the *Ezhegodnik Komintern*, pp. 82-83 and *Jahrbuch 1923/1924*, pp. 66-67.

Table 3

Membership of Trade Unions
(Round figures in thousands)

Country	1913	1919	1920	Total number of workers and employees (1922)
Germany	4,500	8,600	9,400	26,000
Great Britain	3,900	8,000	8,500	15,000
Italy	1,000	1,800	3,600	7,000
France	600	2,500	2,000	8,000
Belgium	230	700	900	1,600
Spain	130	900	1,000	2,000
Austria	400	800	900	2,500
Czechoslovakia	—	1,300	1,600	4,000
Poland	—	1,000	1,000	—
USA	2,600	5,600	5,200	27,000

Sources: *Ezhegodnik Komintern*, pp. 71-72; L. Berthold et al. (Eds.), *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Chronik*, Vol. 2. Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1966, p. 79, 103.

lution, meant in practice mainly *winning them away* from reformist leaders. The latter, however, did not sit with folded hands.

After the Berne Conference the Socialists made considerable efforts to organise the revived Second International. Ramsay MacDonald, Pierre Renaudel, and W. Banning were soon added to its Executive Commission, which initially consisted of three persons—Hjalmar Branting, Arthur Henderson, and Camille Huysmans. A second international conference of Socialist parties was held in *Luzern* from August 1 to 9, 1919. The number of countries sending delegates was fewer than at the Berne Conference (40 delegates from 18 countries). The disputes over the recently signed peace treaties with Germany and her allies were ended by a compromise. Yielding to the mood of the masses the conference condemned intervention against Soviet Russia. The delegates adopted draft rules of the Second International, but decided to convene an international Socialist congress in Geneva in 1920 to adopt them and to discuss matters of the International's programme.¹

Headway was also made with the Berne proposal to found an international organisation of trade unions. An international congress was held in Amsterdam from 28 July to 2 August 1919, at which 91 delegates represented trade union associations in 14 countries;

¹ Julius Braunthal, *Geschichte der Internationale*, Vol. 2, Verlag J.H.W. Dietz, Hanover, 1963, pp. 174-76.

viz. the General Association of German Trade Unions, the British Trades Union Congress, the American Federation of Labor, the French General Confederation of Labour (CGT), and trade union organisations of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Czechoslovakia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. The syndicalist organisations of Germany and the Netherlands also sent delegates. The total membership represented was around 18 million.¹

The congress sessions were stormy.² The disputes primarily concerned the International Charter of Labour included in the Treaty of Versailles (Chapter XIII) and the other peace treaties. Against the objections of Gompers (who had been chairman of the Labour Commission at the Peace Conference in Paris), the congress regretted that the Charter did not "conform in any point to the Programme of Demands drawn up at Berne (February 1919) by the Trade Unions of the principal European countries". Its general principles were too vague, the clause on child labour unclear, and it said nothing about night work for women, or about a system of social security, etc., while the International Labour Office (subsequently the International Labour Organisation) and the annual labour conferences were given only limited functions. Nevertheless the congress decided to take part in the first International Labour Conference which was to be held in Washington (subject to the German and Austrian trade unions being invited), and to co-operate in the ILO's Administrative Council.³

The resolution on the League of Nations said that it was not an alliance of peoples but a union of governments (and then not of all). The working classes would therefore have to become "an effective organ to control the League of Nations" so as to prevent it "from becoming the centre of reaction and oppression". The resolution on "socialisation" said that capital was powerless to reorganise the economy in such a way as to provide prosperity for the masses, and called for conversion of trade union organisations into "the necessary basis for the realisation of the socialisation of the means of production". The congress condemned "the blockade by the Allied Governments against Russia and Hungary".⁴ But all these resolutions had a declaratory character and none of them was binding on anyone.

The chief result of the congress was the founding of the Interna-

¹ *Report of the Proceedings of the International Trade Union Congress Held in Amsterdam, July 28th-August 2nd, 1919*, IFTU, Amsterdam, 1921, pp. 21-22.

² At the Preliminary Conference on 25-26 and 29 July 1919 a compromise was reached on the issue of Germany's responsibility for the war (*Ibid.*, pp. 5-18).

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-52.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

tional Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU), which became known as the *Amsterdam International*. The Bureau of the new trade union international had much broader powers than the prewar International Secretariat. William A. Appleton (Great Britain) was elected chairman. When the German Carl Legien refused to accept the post of second vice-chairman, Léon Jouhaux (France) and Corneille Mertens (Belgium) became the vice-chairmen. Jan Oudegeest and Edo Fimmen (Holland) were elected secretaries. The leaders of the two internationals exchanged telegrams of fraternal greetings and declarations that "we must all unite in the struggle for a lasting peace, welfare, solidarity and fraternity".¹ The position of the Amsterdam International was soon strengthened by revival of the activity of the International Trade Secretariats (miners, engineering workers, transport workers, etc.), which were under its influence. It also took credit for the fact that the Washington Labour Conference, convened in October 1919, recommended the introduction everywhere of an eight-hour day.²

In the situation that had developed in the individual countries and internationally, the struggle between revolutionaries and reformists (Communists and Social-Democrats) for influence over the broad proletarian masses had to embrace the field of activity both of labour parties and of trade union organisations.

LENIN ON WINNING THE MAJORITY AND THE INFANTILE DISEASE OF "LEFT-WING" COMMUNISM

When Lenin set the international communist movement the task of completing its demarcation from opportunists, and the new task of winning the masses over to the revolution and communism, he marked out the concrete roads for tackling them in articles, speeches, and letters.

In order to break finally with opportunism, he said, it was impossible to tolerate anyone in the ranks of the Comintern and Communist parties who accepted the principles of communism in words but worked for agreement with opportunists in deeds; Socialist parties that wanted to join the Comintern should first of all carry out a far-reaching ideological and organisational restructuring of their ranks and purge themselves of opportunism.

On 5 February 1920 the Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI) addressed a letter to "All the Workers of Germany, the Central

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-42.

² L. Lorwin, *Labor and Internationalism*, Macmillan, New York, 1929, pp. 204, 205.

Committee of the German Communist Party, and the Central Committee of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany". It referred to the resolution of the Leipzig Congress of the USPD on opening negotiations re the conditions for joining the Communist International, and was written on the basis of points drafted by Lenin.¹ The letter explained that the leaders of the German Independents and the French centrists were running counter to the wishes of their rank-and-file and the aspirations of the broad masses of the workers. Lenin and the Comintern therefore considered that they should not hurry about uniting, and that it was necessary "to *bide our time* until the revolutionary masses of the French and German workers *correct* the weakness, errors, prejudices, and inconsistencies" of these parties.²

Foreseeing quite a long struggle against social reformists and centrists, Lenin soon wrote: "The Longuetists have in fact remained the reformists they were, masking their reformism by revolutionary phrases and employing the new tag 'dictatorship of the proletariat' merely as a revolutionary phrase. The proletariat does not need such leaders, nor does it need the leaders of the German Independent Social-Democratic Party, or the leaders of the British Independent Labour Party. The proletariat cannot bring about its dictatorship with such leaders."³

Lenin's help to proletarian revolutionaries in their struggle to build really militant communist parties, and the help of the ECCI, were not limited to general advice, but concerned many of the concrete political problems of one country or another. Lenin's talks with representatives of the Communist and labour movement of Austria, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and other countries, and his correspondence (and that of the Comintern) with them, were permeated with the idea that the ideological, political, and organisational break with opportunism should necessarily be carried through to completion, otherwise the rot of right-wing opportunism would infect the communist parties.

In order to cope with the task of winning over the broad masses of the workers who were still under the influence of reformists, Lenin considered that European revolutionaries needed a deep understanding of the experience of seizing and holding power accumulated by the Bolsheviks in Russia during and after the October Revolution. He did not oversimplify the complexity of assimilating others' experience and did not even think of the possibility

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Draft (or Theses) of the R.C.P.'s Reply to the Letter of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 337-44.

² *Ibid.*, p. 344.

³ V.I. Lenin, "A Publicist's Notes", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 358.

of mechanically transferring it from one country to another.

In an article addressed to Italian, French, and German Communists, he criticised opportunists who claimed that "the proletariat must first win a majority in elections carried out *under the yoke of the bourgeoisie*, under the *yoke of wage-slavery*, and must then win power". That was an attempt to substitute "elections, under the old system and with the old power, for class struggle and revolution". On the other hand it was quite obvious that "for the success of its [the proletariat's] revolution, ... *it is absolutely necessary* to have the sympathy of the majority of the working people (and, it follows, of the majority of the population)". That sympathy did not come of itself, but it was not created by elections either. It was "*won* in the course of long, arduous and stern class struggle" using all its methods and means. This struggle, moreover, "does not end with the conquest of political power by the proletariat". It "*continues*, but in *other forms*".¹

What the Bolsheviks' experience provided on that plane was explained to foreign Communists in the article on the returns of the elections for the All-Russia Constituent Assembly, that Lenin wrote specially for *The Communist International* in December 1919. In it he directly posed the question: "How could such a miracle have occurred? [The victory of the October Revolution.—*Ed.*] How could the Bolsheviks, who polled one-fourth of the votes, have won a victory over the petty-bourgeois democrats, who were in alliance (coalition) with the bourgeoisie and who together with the bourgeoisie polled three-fourths of the votes [in the Constituent Assembly.—*Ed.*]?" Basing himself on a careful analysis of the election Lenin answered that there had been "three conditions which determined the victory of Bolshevism:

- (1) an overwhelming majority among the proletariat;
- (2) almost half of the armed forces;
- (3) an overwhelming superiority of forces at the decisive moment at the decisive points, namely: in Petrograd and Moscow and on the war fronts near the centre".

But all these tactical conditions would only have ensured a short-term, unstable victory if the Bolsheviks, having seized power, had been unable to create the *main condition* of all: i.e. "to win to their side the majority of the *non-proletarian* working masses, to win them from the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the other petty-bourgeois parties".²

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Greetings to Italian, French and German Communists", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 58, 60.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 256, 262.

Lenin considered that the Russian experience of 1917-1919 made it possible to draw certain conclusions as to bourgeois parliamentarism and the proletarian revolution in every capitalist country of that time. First of all, decision of the root tasks in a revolutionary situation was not achieved by voting, but by *all the forms* of class struggle, including, in certain conditions, civil war. The issue of the worker party's participation in parliament also had to be considered from that angle; it was important but could not, by any means, be considered the highest or sole form of its activity. Given the deception and self-deception of the masses under capitalism it was a repudiation of revolution to postpone the proletariat's taking of power during a revolution until a formal expression of the will of the majority of the population through an election.

Lenin motivated the legitimacy of this *non-formal approach* to the concept of majority primarily on the point that "the strength of the proletariat in any capitalist country is far greater than the proportion it represents of the total population", because "the proletariat economically dominates the centre and nerve of the entire economic system of capitalism". Even more important, the proletariat "expresses economically and politically the real interests of the overwhelming majority of the working people".¹ Therefore, even in countries where the proletariat was a minority of the population, it could overthrow the bourgeoisie, given favourable conditions. But as a consequence it had to carry out measures, relying on its seizure of state power, that would draw allies to its side. The proletariat, plus the unconscious proletarian, semi-proletarian, and petty-bourgeois sections of the working population, constituted the overwhelming majority of the population of any country.²

While the proletariat had to choose the moment of decisive action correctly in order to win (exploiting the differences between the capitalist class and its petty-bourgeois allies, etc.), after victory it had to know how to neutralise the inevitable wavering of the petty bourgeoisie, in order to retain power.³

Lenin's notes and plans for a pamphlet on the dictatorship of the proletariat, which he intended to write about that time, contain a clear illustration of this idea. Marxism gave a general answer to the problem of "how to pass" from class society to a classless one, indicating the road of socialist revolution. Russia, Hungary, Finland, and Germany had confirmed that "the dictatorship of the proletariat is the *continuation* of the class struggle of the prole-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Constituent Assembly Elections...", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 274.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 274-75.

tariat in *new forms*.¹ That, Lenin said, "is the crux of the matter" that opportunists "do not understand". They try to blur and obliterate the fact that "historical change" is inevitable during the passage from bourgeois democracy to proletarian, because the issue can only be put as follows: "'growing over', 'creeping into', or the break-up of the former and the birth of the latter". It was equivalent to the question: "Revolution, or without revolution? Conquest of political power by the new class, overthrow of the bourgeoisie, or a deal, a compromise between classes?"²

Kautsky, Otto Bauer, Fritz Adler, and others claimed that it was "*not* class struggle *but* a majority" that opened the road to socialism. For them "the proletariat's majority in the population" was "a condition, i.e. the dictatorship of the proletariat was admissible *only when* the proletariat constituted a majority of the population". They stood for "decision *by voting*"—which was the whole essence of "peaceful or pure democracy".³ They claimed that "decision by majority and *strength* of majority" were one and the same thing. But in fact they are not⁴.

Later, comparing the situation in Europe and in Russia, Lenin made very simple, purely illustrative calculations of the possible composition of the majority:

In Europe:	51 per cent proletariat (roughly)	
	+ 10 per cent poor of the 40 per cent middle strata (petty bourgeoisie)	
	<hr/>	
	61 per cent	
In Russia:	20 per cent proletariat (roughly)	
	+ 30 per cent poor	} from 75 per cent petty bourgeoisie
	+ 15 per cent = half of the middle groups	
	<hr/>	
	65 per cent	

So, he concluded, one could show that the proletarian 51 per cent meant, in practice, *less strength* than the proletarian 20 per cent, *when*, in the first case, there was "more imperialist contamination and resistance of the petty bourgeoisie" and in the second case the proletariat was able to "*attract and lead*" the working people. It was incorrect and impossible to take the proletariat "in general", "*in abstracto*". It was necessary to consider what it really was—in the twentieth century, after the imperialist war, in an imperialist

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 95-96.

² *Ibid.*, p. 101.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Outline and Plan for a Pamphlet on the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Complete Works*, Vol. 39, 5th Russian Edition, pp. 453, 456.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 101.

country. There one had to ask, for example, what was "the percentage of imperialists among the proletariat" in that country?¹

In the conditions then a "*split* with the leaders" was inevitable, since it was impossible to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat without overthrowing its opportunist top brass, and passing from "the aristocracy of the working class to the masses". The methods of schooling the masses had also altered. "There was a time (about 1871-1914) when it was necessary to develop the backward people by universal suffrage, without revolution (+strikes, etc.) —The time of revolutions has arrived (1917-), when the revolution of *the proletariat* develops in its civil war."²

From these reflections on paper the diametrical difference between the reformist theorists' casuist phrase about "winning power" by the ballot box, which was unreal then, and the revolutionary leader's scientific approach, based on the real experience of a victorious revolution is obvious; at the same time, Lenin called on the Communists of *every country* to analyse their local conditions and the social structure of the labouring masses concretely. Only in that way, he thought, could serious conclusions be drawn about the possibility of taking and holding power.

The main difficulty facing Communists then, however, was that some of them did not understand the importance of the task of winning over the masses, while some even took a stand of denying it in principle. They refused to see the difference between the opportunist leaders they were bitterly fighting and the rank-and-file members of the Socialist parties and reformist trade unions who followed them. Some Communists, putting their trust in a spontaneous revolutionary outburst of the masses, considered even a recommendation for systematic work among the masses to be a manifestation of hated opportunism. Such attitudes had been displayed earlier, but they became a serious obstacle precisely when the Communist movement had reached the point of very diverse work to win the masses.

A danger signal for Lenin was the letter he received at the end of August 1919 from Sylvia Pankhurst, leader of the extreme leftist British organisation, the Workers' Socialist Federation, composed mainly of women, and editor of *The Workers' Dreadnought*. In describing the state of the labour movement, she maintained that "it is impossible ... to awaken a revolutionary spirit in persons who want to win elections." Therefore, the revolutionary-minded workers, she claimed, "have an utter contempt for Parliamentary action, and will never enter into an alliance with a party that runs candidates

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Outline and Plan for a Pamphlet on the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Complete Works*, Vol. 39, 5th Russian Edition, pp. 454, 457-58.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 457-58.

for Parliamentary or local elections." Asking Lenin to express his view concerning parliamentary activities, she said: "If you were here, I believe you would say: Concentrate your forces upon revolutionary action; have nothing to do with the Parliamentary machine." Lenin passed Sylvia Pankhurst's letter (of July 16, 1919) to the journal *The Communist International*, in which it was published, together with his reply, in September.¹

She was mistaken, however. In his reply, Lenin agreed only that "many workers, who are among the best, most honest and sincerely revolutionary members of the proletariat are enemies of parliamentarism and of any participation in Parliament. The older capitalist culture and bourgeois democracy in any country, the more understandable this is." But, he continued, "I am personally convinced that to renounce participation in parliamentary elections is a mistake on the part of the revolutionary workers of Britain". Motivating his conviction, he pointed out that it was necessary to develop two approaches: (1) a "denial in principle of bourgeois parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy" was legitimate in so far as the revolution (as shown by the experience of Russia, Hungary, Germany, and other countries) wanted to replace the historically outlived bourgeois parliament by a more perfected form, power of Soviets; (2) rejection of any participation whatever in elections and parliamentary activity was incorrect, because such participation, even during a revolution, had great significance for revolutionaries' establishment of unbreakable links with the masses of the workers. For that they could and should make use both of elections to parliament and activity in parliament.²

Lenin realised that it was not so simple to learn how to carry on *revolutionary* parliamentary propaganda in a country where the bourgeoisie had long ago adroitly mastered this refined instrument of its power. But, he considered, "if the workers' party is really *revolutionary*, if it is really a *workers'* party (that is, connected with the masses, with the majority of the working people, with the *rank and file* of the proletariat and not merely with its top crust), if it is really a *party*, i.e., a firmly, effectively knit *organisation of the revolutionary vanguard*, which knows how to carry on revolutionary work among the masses by all possible means, then such

¹ *The Communist International*, 1919, No. 5, pp. 50-53.

² V.I. Lenin, "Letter to Sylvia Pankhurst", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, pp. 561-66. On 5 August 1919 the Bureau of the ECCI, at which Lenin was present decided to work out theses on parliamentarism pointing out the need "to make use of Parliamentary struggle". Accordingly a circular letter was sent to all Communist parties and published in the same issue of *The Communist International* as Lenin's reply to Sylvia Pankhurst. (See also F.I. Firsov, "The Comintern and the Building of a Party of a New Type. 1919-1920", in *The Second Congress of the Comintern*, pp. 70-71.

a party will surely be able to keep its *own* parliamentarians in hand, to make of them real revolutionary propagandists, such as Karl Liebknecht was".¹

Nevertheless, when those lines were written, the chief difficulty was just that *such a party* not only did not exist in Great Britain, where several small groups and amorphous broad organisations like the shop stewards' committees were wrangling bitterly among themselves. It also did not exist in Germany or, in general, anywhere in Europe. And in order to build such a party it was necessary first of all to find the *proper approach to the masses*. What was the way out of this vicious circle?

The issue of participation in parliament (or non-participation) was then only part of a set of problems of ways of extending Communists' influence among the masses so as to prepare them for the decisive battles of the proletarian revolution. "Leftist" views on other issues were also common and propagandised in Austria, Germany, Holland, Italy, and other countries, apart from Great Britain.

In Germany, for instance, the moods of "four-square radicalism" about which Rosa Luxemburg had already spoken, were becoming stronger. They were manifested not only in anti-parliamentarism but also in the slogan "Out of the Unions!", which meant, in practice, when the unions were growing rapidly in influence, that Communists rejected opportunities to influence the revolutionary spirit of the masses of the workers. The Hamburg "Lefts" took their disinclination to work in trade unions to liquidationist ideas as well in regard to the Party; the "universal workers' union" that they decided to build was intended to unite "all revolutionary proletarians" or even "all proletarians" in general.²

Lenin, considering these views mistaken, advised fighting them openly, trying not to exaggerate differences, since, because they accepted the proletarian revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat, they did not express senile decrepitude but "growing pains", and would be outgrown in the course of practical struggle.³

"Leftist" frames of mind also penetrated the Amsterdam Bureau of the ECCI, where they were actively propagandised by the Dutchmen Herman Gorter, Anton Pannekoek, and Sebald Rutgers.⁴ Such views also had their effect on the journal *Kommunismus*, published in Vienna for the countries of Southeast Europe, to which Béla Kun and Georg Lukács contributed. But the leaders of the Communist

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Letter to Sylvia Pankhurst", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 565.

² *Reports to the Second Congress of the Communist International*, Petrograd, 1921, pp. 24-29 (in Russian).

³ V. I. Lenin, "Greetings to Italian, French and German Communists", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 55-57.

⁴ For fuller details see F. I. Firsov, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-78.

Labour Party of Germany and Bordiga's supporters in Italy came out most actively in this spirit.

They put forward many motives to substantiate their "left" views, from considerations of "principled purity of doctrine" and "uncompromising straightforwardness" to frankly anarchistic denial of the role of discipline, or leaders, and of the Communist Party itself. Many rejected standing for parliaments, work in trade unions, and any compromise or collaboration with possible allies, let alone opponents, as allegedly a brake on the revolutionary movement. Others oversimplified the opposition of capitalism and socialism, bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and interpreted them in a primitive way. Not all of them were conscious that in so doing they were cutting themselves off from the masses.

Convinced of the danger threatening the communist movement, Lenin considered writing a pamphlet with a popular exposition of the basics of Marxian strategy and tactics. In actual fact his booklet "*Left-wing*" *Communism—An Infantile Disorder*, which he wrote for the opening of the Second Congress of the Comintern, went far beyond the scope of this original idea. In it he brought out the wealth of the Bolsheviks' experience, exposed the roots of leftism, analysed its manifestations in several European Communist parties, and demonstrated its danger. The book went beyond the limits of its time and became a real encyclopaedia of creative, realistic leadership of the class struggle in the epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism.

Lenin considered "leftism" primarily as a kind of reaction to reformism and the political opportunism of Social-Democratic leaders, as a kind of "growing pains" of the Communist movement.

Its sources were also the political inexperience of Communists, their striving to solve all the problems of the class struggle as fast and as radically as possible, at one fell swoop, their inability to assess the real level of class consciousness of the working class, and their reluctance to do the donkey work among the masses. The idea of the nearness of victory of the revolution itself generated leftist deviation among some Communists. In such conditions revolutionary workers' hatred of opportunist politics often took the form of a sweeping rejection of ways of struggle developed in preceding periods.

The effect on the labour and communist movement of the petty-bourgeois revolutionism carried by the mass of the petty bourgeoisie was a deep-seated social cause of "leftism", as Lenin pointed out. The ruined petty proprietor, experiencing steep and rapid deterioration of life, and losing the material basis of his existence, declassed and enraged by the horrors of capitalism, easily passed to an extreme revolutionism. He demanded an immediate radical

change and upheaval, and brought a spirit of rebelliousness and anarchism into the labour movement. By its very nature, this revolutionism was incapable of a long, drawn-out, sustained, organised struggle and could even become a weapon in the hands of reaction.

The main mistakes of "left-wing" Communists were expressed in that period in a denial (1) of the role of the party and of party discipline; (2) of work in reformist trade unions; (3) of work in bourgeois parliaments; (4) of the admissibility of compromises of any kind. When criticising the adventurism of the "Left" and their disdain of work among the masses Lenin showed that the essence of the hopeless sectarianism threatening Communists with self-isolation stemmed from their lack of confidence in the masses and from their inability to approach them. In a sharp, yet unfailingly friendly polemic with the "Left", he formulated the starting points of what became a necessary *new approach*.

Communist parties needed to learn to orientate themselves rapidly in a changing political situation, and to employ a variety of forms of social struggle, traditional ones included, giving them a new content; to change these forms quickly as the situation altered; to combine legal work and illegal; to switch from one tactical course to another, from certain methods to others that were more effective at that time and to some extent unexpected by the enemy, and to master a whole arsenal of ways and techniques of struggle.

He branded pseudo-revolutionary phrases about refusing to work in reformist trade unions as an unpardonable stupidity, and service to the bourgeoisie, because Communists in that case put these unions under the control of right-wing Socialist leaders and the bourgeoisie. Since many workers still believed in the bourgeois parliament, communist parties were duty bound to utilise the parliamentary tribune as well, to expose bourgeois policies and educate the masses. Communists had to learn how to create their own revolutionary parliamentarism serving the interests of the working class and linked with mass struggle outside parliament, as a counterweight to bourgeois parliamentarism.

The main idea of Lenin's book—winning of the masses to a Marxist revolutionary ideology and policy—was the decisive precondition for success of the proletariat's struggle. Communists therefore had to be always in the thick of the masses, to draw the masses after them, showing when it was necessary to attack and when to manoeuvre, and had to find the link between the day-by-day struggle of the working class and the fight for the ultimate aim.

The task of winning the masses to the Communists' side, of leading them to a new position capable of "ensuring the victory of the vanguard in the revolution", Lenin stressed, could not be achieved

"without the liquidation of Left doctrinairism, and without a full elimination of its errors".¹

Drawing on a thorough analysis of the experience of both the Russian and the European revolutionary labour movement, Lenin wrote that Communists needed to reckon with the influence of bourgeois-democratic and petty-bourgeois views on the masses. In order to "obsolete" reformist traditions "politically", it was necessary to work wherever there were masses who did not immediately understand the need for revolutionary methods of action. Lenin saw the most important job of Communists in being able "to seek, find and correctly determine the specific path or the particular turn of events that will *lead* the masses to the real, decisive and final revolutionary struggle".² Since the masses learned primarily from their own political experience, communist parties had to put forward slogans corresponding to their degree of consciousness, the social psychology of the various strata, and the political traditions and specific character of the labour and democratic movement of their country, and to educate those involved in the struggle in the course of their activities.

The revolutionary vanguard, the communist parties, should, moreover, bear in mind that the "pure" proletariat is surrounded by a mass of extremely diverse transitional types from proletarian to semi-proletarian, small to middling peasants, etc. and that the proletariat itself is extremely heterogeneous in level of development, and national, craft, religious, and other affiliations. It was therefore necessary to learn how to talk to various categories of people in the clearest, most understandable, and lively manner, and to learn that it was impossible to unite all the forces under the banner of the revolution without *a policy of compromise*. It was necessary to march boldly *in a block* with the various parties of the workers and petty proprietors, to make certain concessions to the wavering elements of petty-bourgeois democracy, when and in so far as they turned toward the proletariat. It was important simply that these compromises and understandings should further a rise in the level of the labour and democratic movement, and promote realisation of the revolutionary goal, and that Communists thereby retain full freedom of agitation and criticism of their allies.

It was also necessary to understand that, in order to lead the broad masses, propaganda for communist principles alone was not enough, or repetition alone of the common truths of "pure" communism. Stereotyping and mechanical equating of the tactical canons of the struggle were out of the question. "To seek out, investigate,

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 93.

² *Ibid.* pp. 60, 97.

predict, and grasp that which is nationally specific and nationally distinctive, in the *concrete manner* in which each country should tackle a *single* international task ...—such is the basic task in the historical period that all the advanced countries (and not they alone) are going through.”¹ The internationalism of communist policy did not mean to ignore the differences between national states but, on the contrary, a correct modification of the basic principles in relation to them.

Lenin did not limit himself to general advice. He recommended the British Communists to unite their squabbling groups as quickly as possible, to make use of the parliamentary elections, and all the peripetia of the British Government’s Irish, colonial, and international policy for agitation, and also other fields and spheres of public affairs. He tried to suggest to the Italian “Left” that it was necessary to act in all fields, to overcome puerile “abstentionism”, and to fight bourgeois influence in a serious way, understanding that this would take a long time.² German Communists, he considered, should “seek *and find*” a suitable form of compromise and agreement with the proletarian wing of the USPD that would facilitate a merging with them, and at the same time would not cramp the Communists in their ideological and political fight against the right wing of that party.³

While paying great attention to problems of the *tactics* of the communist movement, Lenin did not lose sight for a minute, however, of the main *strategic* task that governed these tactics and to whose solution they were directed. This task was thorough *preparation*, above all *of the masses*, for the coming new wave of the revolutions. He therefore attached exceptional importance to showing the Communists of Western Europe what they could learn from the experience of the Russian Bolsheviks, who had led the victorious October Revolution. That Revolution had demonstrated the need to establish the proletariat’s political power during the revolution, and to ensure the guiding role of the Communist Party and a firm alliance of the working class with the labouring peasantry and other semi-proletarian strata of the population. These basic features of the Russian Revolution would inevitably be repeated in future socialist revolutions, because they had “a significance that is not local, or peculiarly national, or Russian alone, but international”.⁴

When describing the Russian Bolsheviks’ experience, Lenin drew foreign Communists’ attention primarily to the facts of the party’s

¹ V. I. Lenin, “‘Left-Wing’ Communism—an Infantile Disorder”, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 89, 98, 113-17.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 74, 107-11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

persistent struggle to establish and develop links with the masses, to carry the masses to the revolution, to emancipate them from the influence of opportunist, reformist and petty-bourgeois leaders and leftist adventurers, and to maintain iron discipline in the party. It was in this that Lenin saw "whatever is universally practicable, significant and relevant in the history and the present-day tactics of Bolshevism".¹ At the same time he never tired of repeating that it was necessary to assimilate the Russian experience *in a creative manner* since "there [could] be no question of placing conditions in Russia on a par with conditions in Western Europe",² since "while the working-class movement is everywhere going through what is actually the same kind of preparatory school for victory over the bourgeoisie, it is achieving that development in its *own way* in each country".³

Lenin also attached great importance to a scientific substantiation of communist strategy and tactics, pointing out that Russia's long, hard, bloody experience had taught the Bolsheviks to work out their political line from a far-reaching, thorough analysis of the situation, the alignment of forces, and from an appreciation of the real opportunities and prospects. Subjectivism in the approach to political tasks was dangerous, while it was impossible in any case to base political action simply on a revolutionary frame of mind. "Tactics," he warned, "must be based on a sober and strictly objective appraisal of *all* the class forces in a particular state (and of the states that surround it, and of all states the world over) as well as of the experience of revolutionary movements."⁴ The science of revolutionary struggle called both for assimilation of the experience of other countries and for study of the possibilities of all groups, parties, and classes of a given country; hence "policy should not be determined only by the desires and views, by the degree of class-consciousness and the militancy of one group or party alone".⁵

At the same time Lenin reminded Communists that "politics is a science and an art that does not fall from the skies or come gratis, and that, if it wants to overcome the bourgeoisie, the proletariat must train its *own* proletarian, 'class politicians' of a kind in no way inferior to bourgeois politicians".⁶

Having a profound understanding of the role of *the masses of the people* in creating history, and especially revolutions, Lenin stressed that "the finest of vanguards express the class-consciousness,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

² *Ibid.*, p. 59.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

will, passion and imagination of tens of thousands, whereas at moments of great upsurge and the exertion of all human capacities, revolutions are made by the class-consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of millions, spurred on by a most acute struggle of classes".¹ Lenin had more than once before explained Marx's idea that a revolution is movement of the masses themselves. Now drawing on the experience of three Russian revolutions and the revolutions in Europe, he deduced a *basic law of revolution* from it.

This law brought out the connection between the objective and subjective factors. The initial premise, Lenin considered, was the thesis "of the disposition, if one may so put it, of vast armies, of the alignment of *all* the class forces in a given society *for the final and decisive battle*".² The masses make the revolution, but in order to raise the majority of the working class to the awareness that change is a necessity "propaganda and agitation alone are not enough for an entire class, the broad masses of the working people, those oppressed by capital, to take up such a stand. For that, the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions, which has been confirmed with compelling force and vividness, not only in Russia but in Germany as well."³

Earlier Lenin had usually used the concept of "an objective revolutionary situation" when answering what were the conditions of a revolution. Now, broadening and deepening it, he spoke of a *revolutionary (nation-wide) crisis*, which denoted the next stage, and included, in addition to the existence of objective conditions, the subjective readiness of the social force to begin revolutionary action, and signified a combination and interpenetration of spontaneous and conscious elements.⁴ "The fundamental law of revolution," he wrote, "which has been confirmed by all revolutions and especially by all three Russian revolutions in the twentieth century, is as follows: for a revolution to take place it is not enough for the exploited and oppressed masses to realise the impossibility of living in the old way, and demand changes; for a revolution to take place it is essential that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. It is only when the 'lower classes' *do not want to* live in the old way and the 'upper classes' *cannot carry on in the old way* that the revolution can triumph. This truth can be expressed in other words: revolution is impossible without a nation-wide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters)."⁵

¹ V. I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96.

² *Ibid.*, p. 94.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

⁴ For fuller details see Yu. A. Krasin. *Lenin, Revolution, and Contemporaneity*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 223-34 (in Russian).

⁵ V. I. Lenin "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85.

In order for the first aspect of a crisis to become mature, it is necessary to get the majority of the workers (or in any case the majority of the class-conscious, thinking, politically active workers) to be fully aware of the need for a revolution, and ready to do battle for it. The spontaneous protest of the working people against exploitation and social injustice is very important but it is still not enough for victory. It is necessary to foster the working people's readiness for a stubborn, drawn-out struggle. In another place Lenin spoke of a powerful upsurge in the proletariat of "a *mass sentiment* favouring the most determined, bold and dedicated revolutionary action".¹

The second aspect of a revolutionary crisis presupposed that the ruling classes were experiencing "a governmental crisis, which draws even the most backward masses into politics, ... weakens the government, and makes it possible for the revolutionaries to rapidly overthrow it".² In other words, all the hostile class forces "are sufficiently at loggerheads with each other, have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle which is beyond their strength".³

But Lenin did not limit himself to analysing the actions of the two main opposing forces—"the bottom dogs" and "the top dogs". The experience of the revolutions of the twentieth century had demonstrated the special importance of allowing as well for the behaviour of the intermediate social forces, from which it followed that it was necessary to develop the point about possible allies of the proletariat in a comprehensive manner. He stressed the role of the non-proletarian working people, the petty commodity producers, and the peasants, writing: "*they cannot be ousted, or crushed; we must learn to live with them. They can (and must) be transformed and re-educated only by means of very prolonged, slow, and cautious organisational work.*"⁴ It was therefore necessary, for success of the revolution, to choose the moment when "all the vacillating and unstable, intermediate elements—the petty bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois democrats, as distinct from the bourgeoisie—have sufficiently exposed themselves in the eyes of the people, have sufficiently disgraced themselves through their practical bankruptcy".⁵ In order to beat a stronger opponent Communists had to learn how to find the finest cracks and divisions between their enemies and to try and get a mass ally, "even though this ally is temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable, and conditional. Those who do not understand this reveal a failure to understand even the smallest

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

² *Ibid.*, p. 85.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

grain of Marxism, of modern scientific socialism *in general*.¹

Having written '*Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder*' in a month, Lenin closely followed its speedy publication and translation. The book came out in Russian in June 1920, and in French and English in July, and was immediately given to all the delegates arriving in Moscow for the Second Congress of the Comintern. Lenin also prepared draft theses for that congress on the national and colonial questions, the agrarian problem, and the main tasks of the congress, a draft of the conditions for admission to the Communist International, and the plan of his report. In these documents, he continued to refine points he had begun work on in '*Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder* that were particularly important for the communist movement in the new stage of its development.

THE PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNIST STRATEGY, TACTICS, AND ORGANISATION

The Second Congress of the Communist International was formally opened on 19 July 1920 in Petrograd. The same day, the site for a memorial to Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg was formally laid out on Uritsky Square in the presence of a mass meeting, thousands strong. The congress then moved to Moscow where it worked from July 23 to August 7. A total of 217 delegates took part (including those with consultative status), representing 67 organisations in 37 countries. The delegates of two major centrist parties—the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany (USPD) and the French Socialist Party—also had consultative status. This was a much more representative forum of the international communist movement than the Founding Congress held the year before.

In Lenin's report on the international situation and the main tasks of the Communist International, made on the first working day of the congress, he characterised the general situation as favourable for the revolutionary movement, noting in particular that the oppressed nations of the colonial countries were being drawn into the struggle. It could not be thought, however, that the mounting revolutionary crisis in itself would force the capitalist class into a position with absolutely no way out. It was important that a *proletarian army* had already taken shape, "although sometimes it [was] poorly organised and [needed] reorganising". Now it was only *the action* of the revolutionary parties that could show whether they

¹ V. I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communist—an Infantile Disorder", *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

were able "to utilise this crisis for a successful, a victorious revolution".¹

When appraising the *revolutionary outlook* in his "Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International" written two weeks before the congress and distributed to the delegates,² Lenin had already asked: what should immediate, universal preparation for revolution consist in? In accordance with his idea of the two stages of this preparation, expressed earlier, he wrote that "in the vast majority of capitalist countries, the preparations ... have not been completed, and, in many cases, have not even been systematically begun".³ That, however, did not mean that the proletarian revolution was impossible in the immediate future. On the contrary, "it is perfectly possible, since the entire economic and political situation is most inflammable and abounds in causes of a sudden flare-up; the other condition for revolution, apart from the proletariat's preparedness, viz., a general state of crisis in all the ruling and in all the bourgeois parties, also exists". It followed from the above that "the Communist Parties' current task consists *not in accelerating the revolution, but in intensifying the preparation of the proletariat*".⁴

The congress took place in an atmosphere of general enthusiasm due to the fact that the Red Army, having broken the attack of the Polish militarists, had passed to a fast-moving counter-offensive and was advancing on Warsaw. The advance of the Soviet troops was plotted with flags on a big map in the conference hall, and everyone at the congress, and not just the "leftists" inclined to adventurism, was under the impression that a real turning-point had been reached in the course of the international proletarian revolution. Lenin said in those days that the Versailles system was tottering, that "all Germany began to seeth", and the British workers, having declared that they would not permit their country to join the anti-Soviet war, had set up a Council of Action.⁵

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 234, 227.

² The Theses were printed in the journal *The Communist International*, 1920, No. 12, as well as in *The Second Congress of the Communist International. Proceedings*, pp. 495-508.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 188-89.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 189 (our italics—Ed.). In the plan of this report, drafted on the eve of the congress, Lenin also wrote: "ΣΣ—not in accelerating the revolution but in intensifying the preparation for revolution" (V.I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 41, 5th Rus. Ed., p. 455).

⁵ V.I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at a Congress of Leather Industry Workers, October 2, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 306-307; "Speech Delivered at the Ninth All-Russia Conference of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), September 22, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 276; see also James Klugmann, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain*, Vol. 1, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1968, pp. 84-85.

The militant, attacking mood of the delegates was manifested during the discussion in plenary session of the resolution on the role of the Communist Party. The new introduction to it read: "The world proletariat is confronted with decisive battles. We are living in an epoch of civil war. The critical hour has struck. In almost all countries where there is a labour movement of any importance the working class, arms in hand, stands in the midst of fierce and decisive battles."¹ Therefore, the congress commission that drafted the resolution with Lenin's participation, altered the formulation of his thesis on the tasks of the moment. In the theses voted on 6 August, the congress recorded that "the duty for the moment of the communist parties consists in *accelerating the revolution*, without provoking it artificially until sufficient preparation has been made; such preparation is to be carried on and *emphasised by revolutionary activity*".² The amendment shows how sharply the leadership of the Comintern reacted to the change in the international situation. The new formulation, which was aimed against opportunist passivity, at the same time guaranteed against any danger of adventurism. The most important point was that a rapid shift in the tactical situation did not alter the fundamental *strategic line*, which was defined by Lenin as *systematic, thorough preparation of the proletariat* for the coming revolutionary battles. Although the hopes for a revolutionary upswing in Europe then did not materialise, and the military situation soon altered sharply, this line of the Comintern remained the fundamental basis of communist policy for many years.

In his Theses on the fundamental tasks of the congress Lenin repeated almost word for word what he had said about the hegemony of the proletariat some nine years earlier in relation to Russia³: "The proletariat becomes revolutionary only insofar as it does not restrict itself to the narrow framework of craft interests, only when in all matters and spheres of public life, it acts as the leader of all the toiling and exploited masses." While pointing out that all communist parties "must at all costs give effect to the slogans: 'Deeper into the thick of the masses', 'Closer links with the masses'", he explained that the masses were "all those who toil and are exploited by capital", above all those who were most oppressed and most difficult to organise. Communists must approach them "with particular patience and caution so as to be able to under-

¹ *The Second Congress of the Communist International. Proceedings*, p. 538.

² *Ibid.*, p. 519 (our italics—Ed.); see also *Lenin and the Third International*, pp. 49-50, 53, 242; *The 2nd Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1934, pp. 35-36 (in Russian).

³ V.I. Lenin, "Reformism in the Russian Social-Democratic Movement", *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, 1968, p. 232.

stand the distinctive features in the mentality of each stratum, calling, etc., of these masses".¹

Lenin always considered the proletariat's own organisation, the highest form of which is a *political party*, a *sine qua non* (and, moreover, the most important condition) of the exercise of its hegemony. The guiding role of the Communist Party in the revolutionary process was denied that time by the representatives of non-Marxian revolutionary currents in the labour movement, namely, the Spanish, French, and German anarchosyndicalists, British shop stewards, and American Industrial Workers of the World. With the sorry experience of the reformist political organisations of their countries before them, they declared any political party a legacy of the capitalist system, and counterposed "the peculiarities of Western countries" to the experience of Russia and Soviet Hungary, and the spontaneous outburst of the masses to iron, disciplined organisation.

At the same time serious attacks were also made by the representatives of centrist parties present at the congress on the communist principles of the structure of a revolutionary party. Some claimed that it was necessary to throw the doors of the Communist International wide open to various socialist currents.² Others wanted communist parties to recognise a "broad ideological platform" and to work out their political line by agreement of the various trends within the party. That would have meant, in fact, a reconciliation with opportunism and the conversion of communist parties into a conglomerate of various trends that would have deprived them of the capacity to lead the revolutionary struggle.

Lenin's theory of the revolutionary labour party of a new type, and of its ideological and political principles, organisational structure, and place in the system of mass organisations was set out in the resolution on the role of the Communist Party in the proletarian revolution, and in the conditions of admission to the Comintern developed by the Second Congress.

He considered the absence of a revolutionary party in the working class as equivalent to "completely disarming the proletariat *in the interests of the bourgeoisie*".³ The proletariat could not complete the revolution and win power, the congress stressed, unless it had its own independent political party, because political power "cannot be acquired, organised and directed otherwise than by means of a political party".⁴ The resolution on the role of the Communist

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 194, 192.

² *The 2nd Congress...*, p. 241.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.

⁴ *The Second Congress of the Communist International. Proceedings*, p. 540.

Party continued the idea that the Party defended the interests of the *whole* working class, and surveyed *the whole* of its historical road as a whole. Only a communist party could unite all the diverse organisations of the proletariat—trade unions, co-operatives, factory committees, cultural and educational societies, etc.—and direct their activity to the common goal. No “universal labour union” of any kind, as suggested by the syndicalists, could take the place of a revolutionary political party bringing socialist class-consciousness to the labour movement and being the highest form of organisation of the proletariat.

By defending the basic interests of the working class and leading and uniting all its movements, the Communist Party functioned as “the organised political lever by means of which the more advanced part of the working class leads all the proletarian and semiproletarian mass”.¹ The working class did not need it simply to win power. As the experience of Soviet Russia had already shown, its role after the victory of the Revolution “has not only not diminished, but on the contrary, has greatly increased”.²

In developing the theory of the party of a new type as the advanced, conscious, organised revolutionary vanguard of the working class, Lenin and the Comintern considered clarity of the ideological and theoretical positions of such a party, based on revolutionary Marxism undistorted by opportunism, as a *sine qua non* of its existence. They stressed the need for constant defence of the purity of these principles, and for an irreconcilable struggle against opportunist wavering and shilly-shallying. That meant, in the first place, a final break with the ideology, tactics, and organisations of right-wing opportunism. “We must leave this Congress,” Lenin said “firmly resolved to carry on that struggle to the very end, in all parties. That is our main task.”³

The conditions for admission to the Communist International, starting from that point, demanded a party’s clear recognition of the communist platform and propaganda for “a complete and absolute rupture with reformism and the policy of the ‘centrists’”, and “that such rupture be brought about with the least possible delay”.⁴ Certain aspects of these conditions, associated with the concrete situation of the drawing of a sharp line and of a very sharp struggle in the labour movement, were of significance only at that time. On the whole the 21 Conditions did not cut off revolutionary workers from the Comintern and communist parties but cut off

¹ *The Second Congress... Proceedings*, p. 539.

² *Ibid.*, p. 544.

³ V.I. Lenin, “The Second Congress of the Communist International”, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

⁴ *The Second Congress... Proceedings*, p. 534.

opportunistic and conciliatory groups and currents, whose entry into the communist movement would have weakened it.

But as regards revolutionaries (including syndicalists) who did not understand the role of a party because of political inexperience, it was proposed to pursue a policy of entering into "closer contacts with them and the masses that sympathise with them, and to explain to them in a friendly spirit—on the basis of the experience of all revolutions and particularly of the three Russian revolutions in the twentieth century—the erroneous nature of their views ... and not to desist from further efforts to amalgamate with these organisations to form a single Communist Party".¹ This policy of the Comintern fostered a differentiation in the ranks of anarchists and syndicalists; many of them—in Spain, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and other countries—began gradually to come closer to an understanding of the tasks of the communist movement and to join it.

Underlying the organisational structure of communist parties were the principles of democratic centralism tried and tested by the Bolsheviks' experience. They ensured the electivity and accountability of party organs, Communists' direct participation in the adoption of decisions and control over their implementation, i.e. very broad democracy. At the same time they gave the organisation a consistency of purpose and singleness of aim, unity of will and action, and internal discipline. Subordination of the party groups in parliaments, municipalities, trade unions, and other organisations to the party centre, and the binding nature of party decisions for all party members, including the leaders, helped communist parties to maintain organisational, political, and ideological autonomy and independence in a hostile capitalist environment.

One of the most important documents adopted by the congress was the Statutes of the Communist International, which based its structure and organisation on the principles of democratic centralism. The Statutes stated that since the Comintern made "its task to emancipate the workers of the *entire* world" its ranks "fraternally unite men of all colours: white, yellow and black—the toilers of the entire world".² And they stressed that "to all intents and purposes the Communist International should represent a single universal Communist Party, of which the parties operating in every country form individual sections".³

This organisational structure was due to the concrete historical conditions of the time and the tasks of the revolutionary battles. The 21 Conditions of Admission to the Comintern said: "The Communist International, operating under the conditions of most acute civ-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Theses on the Fundamental Tasks...", *op. cit.*, pp. 200-201.

² *The Second Congress... Proceedings*, p. 511.

³ *Ibid.*

il warfare, should be centralised in a better manner than the Second International. At the same time, the Communist International and the Executive Committee are naturally bound in every form of their activity to consider the variety of conditions under which the different parties have to work and struggle, and generally binding resolutions should be passed only on such questions upon which such resolutions are possible."¹

Centralisation was a real necessity in the early years of the Comintern's existence. It was a source of strength, and counter-balanced certain weaknesses of the young communist parties. But it was not this organisational principle that was in fact the determining one, or the structure, which was later altered, but the conscious readiness of each communist party to take the interests of the international working class into consideration in its activity, and to link its own struggle with them. As Lenin stressed in a letter to Austrian Communists, written after the congress, Communists were proud that they tackled issues of the class struggle "by submitting to the international discipline of the revolutionary proletariat, with due account of the experience of the workers in different countries, reckoning with their knowledge and their will, and thus giving effect in deed (and not in word, as the Renners, Fritz Adlers and Otto Bauers do) to the unity of the workers' class struggle for communism throughout the world".²

The position of communist parties as sections of a single international organisation imposed certain obligations on them, naturally. At the same time the Statutes also set out their rights, including the right to decide issues of practical policies independently, within the framework of the general principles. In the conditions of that time the point about the autonomy of communist parties was only raised by those who were trying to keep opportunists and centrists in their ranks. The ECCI wrote to the USPD on 28 September 1920 that "whenever the opportunists did not want to obey the majority of workers they started to cry about autonomy".³ Lenin referred to this when speaking of the situation in the Italian Socialist Party. The internationalist stands of the Comintern and communist parties did not run counter to the development of the concrete struggle in any particular country. The underestimation of the concrete, historical conditions to be found in some of the documents of that time was not a manifestation of a consciously adopted course but was due to the communist movement's lack of sufficient maturity.

The question of the Communist Party's links with the masses was

¹ *The Second Congress... Proceedings*, p. 536.

² V.I. Lenin, "Letter to the Austrian Communists", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 269.

³ *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, No. 14, 1920, pp. 2968-2969.

posed most sharply at the congress. Lenin, who attached great importance to a proper understanding of the "leaders, the Party, the class, the masses" relationship, had already, earlier, stressed that counterposing "*in general*, the dictatorship of the masses with a dictatorship of the leaders is ridiculously absurd, and stupid".¹ At the congress he explained to Jack Tanner and other British shop stewards that nothing could be got without leadership by an organised, class-conscious minority. The party, of course, could only unite a minority of the class just as really class-conscious workers were always only a minority of all the workers. "We are therefore obliged to recognise," Lenin said of the role of the Communist Party, "that it is only this class-conscious minority that can direct and lead the broad masses of the workers."²

When breaking down prejudices against political parties "*in general*", Lenin drew attention to the fact that "we want ... new and different parties", and not parties like those of the Second International; "we want parties that will be in constant and real contact with the masses and will be able to lead those masses".³ He posed the issue very sharply: not to suffer opportunists in the party, because that leads to collaboration with the bourgeoisie; constantly to maintain links between the vanguard of the working class and the rest of the workers, and to guide the movement of the masses. "If the minority is unable to lead the masses and establish close links with them," he said, "then it is not a party, and is worthless in general."⁴

The Conditions of Admission continued Lenin's idea that communist parties "should be bound to carry on systematic and persistent Communist work in the labour unions, cooperatives, and other labour organisations of the masses"⁵ and also in the army (where that was banned, to do so illegally) and in the countryside.⁶ At the same time very close links with the masses should not lead to concessions to backward frames of mind. The Second Congress therefore recorded: "Under certain historical conditions the working class is very likely to be impregnated with numerous reactionary elements. The task of Communism is not to adapt itself to such retrograde elements of the working class, but to raise the whole working class to the level of the Communist vanguard."⁷

¹ V.I. Lenin, " 'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *op. cit.*, pp. 41-43.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *op. cit.*, p. 235.

³ V.I. Lenin, "The Second Congress...", *op. cit.*, p. 236.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

⁵ *The Second Congress... Proceedings*, p. 534.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 533.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 539.

While continuing to consider social reformism the main danger in the labour movement Lenin at the same time expressed himself, in polemics against "leftists", in favour of a more flexible approach to centrist parties and their members. He did not agree, for example, with the statements of Wilhelm Münzenberg and David Wijnkoop that it was not necessary in general to talk with centrists, and insisted on the need to draw a distinction between right-wing leaders and those representatives of the revolutionary workers with whom it was necessary to talk in order to win the masses to the Communists' side.¹ He tried to convince William Gallacher and Sylvia Pankhurst on the same point about the desirability of British Communists' affiliating to the Labour Party on condition that they retained the possibility to criticise its leaders and pursue a revolutionary line.²

Gallacher later recalled one talk during which Lenin said to him: "I want to ask you a question. You say that the bourgeoisie are able to buy up all the people who get into Parliament. If the British workers sent you into Parliament to represent their interests, would you be corrupted?" I looked at him in surprise and mumbled: 'That's a strange question.' 'Comrade Gallacher,' Lenin continued, 'it's a very important question. Would you let the bourgeoisie buy you?' 'No,' I answered. 'I cannot let anyone or anything corrupt me.'

"Leaning forward, Lenin looked at me. Having heard my reply, he straightened up and smiling broadly said: 'Comrade Gallacher, you must see to it that the workers send you to Parliament. Then you will show them how an incorruptible revolutionary will behave there. You will demonstrate how it is necessary to use Parliament in a revolutionary way.'

"During the talk I was forced to agree that we had made a very serious mistake in leaving the working class of Britain to the mercy of opportunists like MacDonald, Henderson, & Co."³

It had been agreed at a meeting of representatives of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, and unions in Italy, Spain, France, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia, on the eve of the congress to set up an International Trade Union Council. Revolutionaries were recommended not to leave existing trade unions, but to spread their communist ideas within them, to try and drive out the opportunist leaders, and so create an international militant organisation of the proletariat acting under the ideological guidance of the Comintern. That was the reply to the formation of the reformist Amsterdam Trade Union International.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress...", *op. cit.*, p. 250.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 257-63.

³ W. Gallacher, "Revolutionary Socialism in Scotland and the October Revolution", *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, No. 4, 1957, pp. 38-39 (retranslated from Russian).

A resolution on "When and Under What Conditions Soviets of Workers' Deputies Should Be Formed" was passed unanimously and without discussion by the congress. It summed up the international experience accumulated, and unambiguously pointed out that the very idea of Soviets could be compromised either by their creation wherever and whenever the situation was not ripe for them, or by constructing impracticable, formalistic plan of a "Soviet system" (very many such plans were concocted in Germany and Austria). The resolution therefore said very clearly: the precondition for the formation of workers' Soviets was the existence of conditions corresponding to the concept of a *revolutionary crisis* in the country. In the absence of such conditions Communists should tirelessly propagate "the idea of Soviets among the masses", but should not "proceed to the direct realisation of ... Soviets", because "Soviets without a proletarian revolution inevitably become a parody of Soviets".¹

Organisational consolidation of the communist parties and the Comintern, and development of their work in Soviets, trade unions, and other organisations with the aim of drawing the masses of the workers to their side, were the first condition for realising the idea of hegemony of the proletariat in the coming revolutionary battles. A second condition was thorough working out of the problem of the *allies of the working class*. That was primarily a matter of the *labouring peasantry*, alliance with whom had guaranteed the Russian proletariat's coming to power in the October Revolution, and retaining of power. The point was all the more important because Social-Democracy in the West either scorned it or treated the agrarian and peasant questions in isolation from the political tasks of the revolution. Many European revolutionaries, too, even the most experienced, in turn did not attach the necessary importance to an alliance of the working class with the peasantry, which had already had a disastrous effect on the course of the revolutions in Finland, Germany, and Hungary, and the revolutionary movements in Bulgaria and Poland. The Russian experience, moreover, had not only not been taken into account, but had sometimes been frankly rejected.

The preliminary treatment of the agrarian question for the congress had been done by Julian Marchlewski, the Polish member of the ECCI, in an article "The Agrarian Question and the World Revolution".² This issue, he stressed, had become of the greatest significance when revolutionary action was on the agenda. The Russian experience was very instructive, but the problem in Western Europe and America called for other solutions. Marchlewski divided Europe into two re-

¹ *The Second Congress of the Communist International. Proceedings*, pp. 567-69.

² *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, No. 12, 1920, pp. 2085-2094.

gions, according to their forms of landholding and farming: countries with a predominance of large-scale farming (the Baltic Republics, Poland, the Ukraine, Bohemia, Hungary, Romania, Eastern Germany, and part of Austria), and countries with petty peasant landownership and farms (part of Austria, France, Holland, Italy, Portugal, Spain, the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, and Western Germany).

In the first group the labouring peasantry were largely a revolutionary element because the essential factor in the political life and social affairs of these countries was the contradiction between the peasantry and the big landowners (the barons in Latvia, the *szlachta* in Poland, Lithuania, and the Ukraine, the magnates in Hungary, and the junkers in Germany). The proletariat, by first neutralising this peasantry, could then draw them over to its side, expropriating the big private estates without compensation, cancelling peasants' debts, and declaring the working peasantry's ownership and use of the land inviolable, and providing self-government through the system of Soviets.

In the second group of countries, Marchlewski considered, the position was not only different from that in the first, but was also extremely varied in several respects. In Italy (and to some extent in Spain and Portugal) the revolutionary proletariat had a "reliable ally" in the working peasantry; things were less favourable in Western Germany, France, and other countries, where petty-bourgeois property was very firmly entrenched and where the peasantry in all respects was highly conservative, and sometimes frankly reactionary. Hopes of drawing the broad masses of these peasants to the side of revolutionary actions were quite groundless. But these peasants, too, could be neutralised by a compromise, namely, cancellation of debts and partial dividing up of big estates. In all cases the rural proletariat were natural allies of the industrial workers, while the rich peasants, who were especially strong in Bavaria, Württemberg, and Scandinavia, were their enemy. On the ideological and political plane a main enemy was the clergy, especially the Catholic clergy, who had great influence in the countryside.

Lenin highly appreciated Marchlewski's scheme, which splendidly demonstrated why the Second International could not even pose the question of the proletariat's tactics in rural areas. Marchlewski, he said, had provided "the theoretical principles of a communist agrarian programme", on which the congress could take a decision. But it did not escape his attention that Marchlewski had adopted a not quite correct stand in relation to division of landowners' estates among the peasants. Lenin was also familiar with the report submitted to the National Council of the PSI by the L'Ordine Nuovo group in Turin, whose proposals, he thought, were "fully in keeping with

the fundamental principles of the Third International"¹—praise that was by no means frequent with him. The Turin report had said, in particular, that the party, while basing itself on the industrial and agricultural workers should regard "the other strata of the working people as auxiliaries of the strictly proletarian class".² The party should "prepare, draw up and distribute a programme ... formulating the concrete solutions that the proletariat, when it becomes the dominant class, will give to all the essential problems—economic, political, religious, educational—that beset the various sections of the Italian working population".³ It was really necessary to co-ordinate the actions of the workers and peasants. The task of the party "is to focus the attention of all the masses on itself, so that its directives may win their permanent trust and thus become their guide and intellect".⁴

Lenin himself wrote the "preliminary draft" of the theses on the agrarian question, concentrating attention primarily on the connection between the interests of the working people of town and country. "There is no salvation for the working masses of the countryside except in alliance with the communist proletariat, and unless they give the latter devoted support in its revolutionary struggle to throw off the yoke of the landowners (the big landed proprietors) and the bourgeoisie." But, he said, "the industrial workers cannot accomplish their epoch-making mission of emancipating mankind from the yoke of capital and from wars if they confine themselves to their narrow craft, or trade interests, and smugly restrict themselves to attaining an improvement in their own conditions, which may sometimes be

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International", *op. cit.*, p. 199. On Lenin's suggestion, this document, written by Antonio Gramsci, was published in the same issue of *The Communist International* as Marchlewski's article; see also *The Communist International*, No. 12, 1920.

² Antonio Gramsci, "Towards a Renewal of the Socialist Party". In *Selected Political Writings (1910-1920)*. Selected and edited by Quentin Hoare. Translated by John Mathews (Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1977), p. 195.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 191. See also Gramsci's article *Workers and Peasants* (*op. cit.*, pp. 83-87) and other writings. Subsequently he pointed out that "the Turin Communists posed concretely the question of the 'hegemony of the proletariat', i.e. of the social basis of the proletarian dictatorship and the workers' state." They considered it necessary to create "a system of class alliances", above all with the peasantry, because "in Italy the peasant question, through the specific tradition, has taken two typical and particular forms—the Southern question and that of the Vatican" (see Antonio Gramsci, "Some Aspects of the Southern Question". In *Selected Political Writings (1921-1926)*, Translated and edited by Quentin Hoare (Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1978, p. 443). In Yugoslavia D. Dimitrievič and F. Filippovič arrived at a correct posing of the question (see K.K. Shirinya, "Problems of the Working Class's Alliance with the Peasantry". In *The 2nd Congress...*, *op. cit.*, p. 120ff.).

tolerable in the petty-bourgeois sense". The working class could not play the role of leader "unless the class struggle is carried into the countryside, unless the rural working masses are united about the Communist Party of the urban proletariat, and unless they are trained by the proletariat".¹

In approaching the point about how to do that in the different conditions of Western Europe and America, Lenin stressed the *differentiated grouping* of the farm population of developed countries. Beginning his survey "from the bottom", he noted that the *majority* of this population comprised three groups: the agricultural proletariat, the semi-proletariat or parcellar peasants, and the small peasants. The proletariat had to draw them all into the struggle, or at least to its side, and achieve independent, separate organisation of the rural proletariat. With proper work the first and second groups would both become communist supporters. The petty peasantry would support the proletarian revolution if it freed them from rent immediately, and from mortgages and various forms of oppression by and dependence on the big landed proprietors, and gave their farming immediate help. It was inevitable that this section would waver. Because all these groups had an interest in the victory of socialism, they would resolutely support the proletariat, but "only *after* the latter has won political power, only *after* it has resolutely dealt with the big landowners and capitalists, and only *after* these downtrodden people see *in practice* that they have an organised leader and champion, strong and firm enough to assist and lead them and to show them the right path".²

As to the *middle peasantry*, Lenin thought it possible to neutralise them and later bring them to collective farming "with extreme caution and only gradually, by force of example, without any coercion". It was inevitable, however, that there would be a fight with the *big peasants*; if they put up resistance, they would have to be smashed. But it was not an immediate task to expropriate them.³

Lenin's ideas on the ways for Communists to win the majority of the working and exploited people to their side were positively received by the delegates at the congress. Antonio Graziadei (Italy) remarked that he was "very original" on this issue and had tried to avoid the two opposite mistakes made by Socialists who either declared the small peasants to be doomed and so delivered them over to the enemy, or considered it necessary to organise them first and only then make the revolution. The French delegate Raymond Lefebvre said

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on the Agrarian Question", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 152-53.

² *Ibid.*, p. 156.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 157, 158.

that there was no hope of revolution in France if the whole mass of petty proprietors were against the proletariat.¹ Then Arthur Crispien (USPD) treated Lenin's idea as "a relapse of long overcome petty-bourgeois mentality" and even "a deviation from our Marxist view".² Giacinto Serrati (PSI) expressed fears that concessions to the "rural petty bourgeoisie" *before the revolution* would damage the interests of the proletariat. All these statements were rejected by the congress as unsubstantiated.³

The question of what would happen to big farms *after the revolution* became the main subject of dispute in the commission. Although Marchlewski was absent,⁴ his cautious attitude to the breaking up of landlords' estates where peasant private ownership of land had long been established, was supported by many delegates. They felt that the dividing up of big estates would increase the number of small, economically less profitable farms, and the stratum of petty proprietors, who could become a brake on socialist transformation of the village. In reply Lenin brought out the political necessity of a firm alliance of the working class and the peasantry, through which, he considered, the most effective specific economic decisions would become possible. At the end of the discussion all agreed with Lenin's thesis: "In the advanced capitalist countries the Communist International considers that it should be a prevailing practice to preserve the large agricultural establishments and manage them on the lines of the 'Soviet Farms' in Russia."⁵ In the final text of the theses this proposal was supported by a developed argument, and the thesis about the possibility of a partial division of the land among the small peasants was referred to economically less developed countries with medieval survivals and an insignificant role for large-scale farming.

Lenin's fundamental ideas, moreover, were given a bolder relief: "(1) The division of big landowners' property is the surest way to attract the peasants to the side of the revolution; (2) To secure the victory of the proletariat and its stability, is the first and fundamental task of the proletariat... The proletariat has no right, whenever the success of the revolution is at stake, to halt because of a temporary decrease of production."⁶ Replying to Arthur Crispien, who had declared that handing over of the land to the small peasants would mean "sacrificing the interests of the proletariat",⁷ Lenin cited the book of the former People's Commissar of the Hungarian Soviet Re-

¹ *The 2nd Congress...*, pp. 377-86.

² *Ibid.*, p. 225.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 383, 387-88.

⁴ He had gone to the Polish-Soviet front. The German delegate Ernst Meyer became the reporter.

⁵ *The Second Congress... Proceedings*, p. 470.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 471.

⁷ *The 2nd Congress...* p. 225.

public, Eugen Varga, in which he had admitted that the fact that the agrarian reforms had given the rural poor nothing had a negative effect in Hungary.¹ Even in highly developed countries, including Germany, Lenin said, "large-scale farming can be preserved, and yet the small peasants can be provided with something of considerable importance to them... If the proletarian state authority does not act in this way, it will be unable to retain power."²

The review of the agrarian problem at the Second Congress of the Comintern was a major step toward developing communist strategy and tactics. The discussion in the session, and in the agrarian commission, was a real school for the participants; the theses adopted became a programme for a whole historical period. Communist parties were recommended on the basis of it to draft agrarian programmes corresponding to the concrete socio-economic conditions of their countries.³

The issue of the relation of the fight for the socialist revolution to the struggle for national liberation had the same vital strategic significance.⁴ The decision on the *national-colonial* question adopted by the congress on the basis of Lenin's theses brought out the close connection between the struggle of the working class of developed capitalist countries and the national liberation movement of the oppressed peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies. The congress called for active encouragement of the national-revolutionary trend in the liberation struggle.

While supporting the national demands put forward by the masses in multinational capitalist countries, the congress recalled that the capitalist classes of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Poland were exploiting the creation of independent states in order to spread illusions about opportunities allegedly to be opening up for tackling all social problems gradually, by national efforts, without class struggle. While exposing bourgeois nationalism Communists should tie up the tasks of national liberation more closely with the social ones.

Three main revolutionary forces were fighting imperialism in the new epoch, viz., Soviet Russia, the labour movement of capitalist countries, and the national liberation movement of the oppressed peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies. The strategy of the revolution-

¹ See E. Varga, *Die wirtschaftspolitische Probleme der proletarischen Diktatur*, Neue Erde, Vienna, 1920. For Lenin's marginal notes on this book, see *Lenin Miscellany VII*, Moscow, 1928, pp. 340-76 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *op. cit.*, pp. 249-50.

³ K.K. Shirinya, *art. cit.*, pp. 138-43.

⁴ See Chapter 8 of this volume for the national liberation movement and the attitude of the revolutionary proletariat to it.

ary working class called for a clear understanding of the need for their very close interaction.

At the first session of the ECCI after the congress, on 7 August 1920, its membership, delegated by the parties, was confirmed. In accordance with the Statutes of the Comintern adopted, the RCP(B), as the party of the country where the Executive Committee worked, had five representatives on it, 13 other parties and two regions (the Far East and the Near East) had one each. A Small Bureau of the ECCI was elected, as follows: G. E. Zinoviev (chairman), N. I. Bukharin, M. V. Kobetsky, Ernst Meyer (later replaced by Fritz Heckert), and A. Rudnyanski; it was later joined by Béla Kun and Alfred Rosmer.¹

Taken as a whole the decisions of the Second Congress constituted, in essence, the programme of the Comintern. The communist movement had collectively worked out, and reflected in the documents adopted, the fundamental strategic, tactical, and organisational principles that could guide young communist parties.

The Manifesto adopted by the congress noted that "millions and tens of millions who lived outside politics turn into a revolutionary mass". It pointed out that "the Communist International is an international party of proletarian uprising and proletarian dictatorship. It has no other aims and tasks but the aims and tasks of the working class itself... It does not create universal recipes and incantations, it relies on the world experience of the working class in the past and present, cleanses it of mistakes and deviations, sums up its gains and recognises and adopts only those revolutionary formulas which are the formulas of mass action."²

When summing up the results Lenin noted with satisfaction that the First Congress had "only unfurled the banner of communism", but now "a world army of the revolutionary proletariat" was rallying around it. The congress, having blocked access to opportunism, had also corrected the mistakes of those Communists who wanted without fail to go "left". The organisation, clear programme of action, solidarity, and discipline of all communist parties were what would make it possible, Lenin considered, "for the vanguard of the workers' revolution to march forward with giant strides to its great goal".³

REFORMISTS' INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY

The Congress of the *Labour and Socialist International*, held simultaneously in Geneva, was in striking contrast to that of the Comin-

¹ *The 2nd Congress...*, p 457.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 563-64.

³ V.I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *op. cit.*, pp. 270-71.

tern. It had not managed to meet at the beginning of the year, and sat from 31 July to 6 August. In order to stress its continuity with the Second International it called itself the Tenth Congress, as if there had never been a collapse in 1914.

Seventeen Socialist and Social-Democratic parties were represented at Geneva (Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, Sweden, and Switzerland, and the Musavatists of Azerbaijan, the Mensheviks of Georgia, Latvia, and Russia), i.e. ten countries fewer than at the Berne Conference eighteen months before. The representatives of five parties, moreover, declared that they were present only for information. Ten delegations represented only one of the factions in the labour movement of their countries (since the others had broken with the Second International). Thus only leaders of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany arrived, from France the Aubriot-Rozier group, from Italy the Unione Socialista Popolare (People's Socialist Union), from Switzerland the Grutlénne Union, and so on. Only the delegations of Great Britain, Belgium, Denmark, Holland, and Sweden (and in part of Germany) could claim to be backed by the majority of the organised workers of their countries. The report of the congress, published by the International Labour Office, confirmed that "a considerable work of elimination had taken place during the year 1919-20 among the members of the national delegations. The irreconcilable dissidents had already withdrawn, so that differences were thus reduced to questions of degree rather than of principle".¹

Having formally decided to reconstitute the International, the congress expressed the hope that the "lost sheep" would return to the fold. The Executive,² which was to be seated in London and based on the strongest of the adhering parties, the Labour Party, was made responsible for keeping in contact with the socialist and labour organisations not represented at the congress, and getting them to join the International. The congress approved the rules proposed the year before at the Lucerne Conference. In contrast to the Congress of the Comintern, where clear conditions of admission were drafted and adopted, and the need for strict discipline and accord in implementing the decisions adopted was emphasised, the Geneva Congress had, in the opinion of the speakers, to display a "spirit of conciliation" and patience, to throw the doors wide open to all who wanted to join, and "to make advances to hostile and stand-offish groups".³ This

¹ *The Congress of the Labour and Socialist International. Geneva, July 31st-August 6th, 1920*, ILO, Geneva, 1920, p. 5.

² Arthur Henderson was chairman of the Executive, its members including James Ramsay MacDonald, Thorvald Stauning, Albert Thomas, Otto Wels, Hjalmar Branting, Pieter Troelstra, Emile Vandervelde, and Louis de Brouckère.

³ A. Braun, *Der Internationale Kongress zu Genf*, Buchhandlung Vorwärts, Berlin, 1920, pp. 27-29, 35.

"quest", of course, applied only to reformists of various hue and did not extend to revolutionaries.

When considering the general policy of the Second International the congress was forced to state that the Versailles system had created an even more uneasy situation in the world than that before the war, and had led to a growth of militarism, while the League of Nations had not become an instrument of peace. Although the International Labour Office (like the League of Nations) was not within the sphere of influence of the working class, the congress (in its resolution on the report of Camille Mertens, vice-president of the Amsterdam Trade Union International, and Tom Shaw) enthusiastically welcomed its activity. While protesting against the continuation of intervention in Russia, the delegates to the congress did not fail to note that the preservation of martial law was explained by the fear of the Russian Revolution.

The central issues at Geneva were those of the programme. The commentator from the International Labour Office noted: "The Moscow International has formulated its social and political programme, and has even applied it almost in its entirety. It was indispensable that the Second International should also focus all the principles which are to form the basis of its action, that it should oppose to the Bolshevik edifice the edifice of Democratic Socialism."¹ The most acute desire of the organisers of the Geneva Congress was to find a counterpoise to the Moscow, Third International.

The Social-Democratic leaders of various countries had learned how to camouflage their attitude to the revolution by artificially breaking down the problem of the transition to socialism into two seemingly independent issues: (a) "socialisation" and (b) political power of the proletariat. At the Lucerne Conference the delegates had already exploited the experience of Germany and Austria, where the Social-Democratic leaders, coming out in favour of "socialisation", had tried at the same time, by means of this dodge, to shed responsibility not only for refusing to support revolutionary actions but even for counteracting them. The conference had set up two separate commissions to draft programmes. The commission on "socialisation" had included Sidney Webb, Philip Snowden, Albert Thomas, and Otto Hue; corresponding commissions had been formed in several countries. Otto Bauer's pamphlet *The Road to Socialism* had been taken as the basis for discussion, and also the work of the commission of the Dutch Social-Democratic Party, headed by E. M. Wiebaut, *The Question of Socialisation*. Wiebaut, who was the reporter at the congress, explained socialisation in his book as follows: "Socialisation is the systematic pooling of production. It is not the same thing as so-

¹ *The Congress of the Labour and Socialist International*, p. 10.

cialism. It is the road which leads to socialism. Socialisation is that part of the principles of socialism which can be realised at the present moment."¹

In the resolution of the Geneva Congress "socialisation" was treated as "the transformation from ownership and control by capitalists, to ownership and control by the community, of all the industries and services essential for the satisfaction of the people's needs; the substitution, for the wasteful production and distribution with the sole object of private profit, of efficient production and economical distribution, with the object of the greatest possible utility; the transformation, from the economic servitude of the great mass of the actual producers under private ownership, to a general participation in management by the persons engaged in the work".² The need for this transformation was motivated on the one hand by the constant, rapid growth of control of production by capitalist monopolies, which led to arbitrary manipulation of prices to the detriment of the consumer, and on the other hand by the intensification of organised workers' actions against the continued existence of "a system of production which keeps them in subjection, and does not even enable them to raise effectively their Standard of Life". "The consequent intolerableness of Capitalism renders every day more urgent the reconstruction of industry on the lines of socialisation."³

But it was not concluded from this, in general correct (though unclear and inadequate) statement, long substantiated by Marxists and written into the programmes of a number of Social-Democratic parties, that the working class, having acquired political power and broken the resistance of the capitalist class, should "expropriate the expropriators" and organise social, socialist production. On the contrary, the congress decision simply did not mention the issue of power; and during the discussion speakers frankly rejected both the theory and the practice that a necessary premise of any real socialisation was the establishment of proletarian power. The speeches very categorically claimed that "socialisation" should be implemented gradually, step by step, industry by industry, without direct involvement of the masses, so as to avoid the slightest damage to production. The ILO commentary on the resolution particularly stressed that this thesis was counterposed to Bolshevik practice, which was said to take "the form of an energetic concentration in the hands of the State of all the industrial production of the nation" and was "carried out for the benefit of the proletariat", that is to say "of one social class".⁴

The resolution of the Geneva Congress on "socialisation" displayed

¹ *The Congress of the Labour and Socialist International*, p. 12.

² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 25.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

maximum concern for the capitalists. Alienation of private property without compensation, through confiscation, was in general excluded. The means recommended for compensation were taxation, limitation of inheritance, and so on. "Socialisation" should also not be reduced to nationalisation; municipalisation and co-operation should be provided for as well. Instead of workers' control, which could have given the conditions for real democratic management of production, the resolution envisaged a complete separation of control from management. The control bodies should consist only of one-third workers in the industry, one-third management (including technicians), and one-third "the community as a whole". Since this orderly and peaceful, rather than revolutionary and destructive implementation of "socialisation" was not accepted without conflict, the resolution said that the working class had "the right to strike", optimistically adding: "when it is no longer a question of resisting the profit-making capitalist ... it may be expected that the public opinion of the community as a whole will be accepted as decisive".¹

The second commission, which was given the job of drafting the resolution on "the political system of socialism" was even more representative, and included Beatrice and Sidney Webb, Otto Bauer, Karl Kautsky, Ramsay MacDonald, Emile Vandervelde, Pieter Troelstra, and Pierre Renaudel. Not long before the congress the Webbs had published a book in England entitled *A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain* (London, 1920). In Geneva Sidney Webb was the reporter and author of the resolution, which was meant to demonstrate that the matter was already ripe for passing from theory to practice. Emile Vandervelde called it "the most important resolution of the Congress".²

Based on a direct opposing of the ideas of "democratic socialism" to those of socialist revolution, it assumed that "the progressive disintegration of the Capitalist System, which has been increasingly taking place during the years of war, and not less during the years of peace following the war, makes it ever more urgent that Labour should assume power in society".³ Here the authors arbitrarily included all workers by hand and brain in general in the working class (including peasants and artisans), and declared that it was "an essential condition of this assumption of power by Labour that its ranks should be sufficiently united, and that it should understand how to make use of the power in its hands".⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 26; A. Braun, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-34.

² *The Congress of the Labour and Socialist International*, pp. 10-11, 19. It is interesting that Adolf Braun did not mention this point.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

While recognising that this objective could not be achieved "without the utilisation by Labour of its industrial as well as its political power", and that "direct action in certain decisive conflicts cannot be entirely abandoned,"¹ the resolution then reduced this recognition to nought. It not only repudiated "methods of violence" in general, but also said that "any tendency to convert an industrial strike automatically into political revolution cannot be too strongly condemned".² There was no place for revolution at all: "Socialism will not base its political organisation upon Dictatorship. It cannot seek to suppress Democracy: its historical mission, on the contrary, is to carry Democracy to completion."³ The inevitability of the ruling classes' resistance even to peaceful establishment of Labour's power, demonstrated by the recent experience of several countries, was simply ignored.

In exactly the same way no account was taken of the possibility of other forms of democracy than bourgeois parliamentary. The resolution did not mention workers' councils. A certain concession to "left" moods, which were represented at the congress by Troelstra, was the admission, simply, that trade union or craft representation might be created in addition to parliament (which, considering the complexity of the political conditions and growth of the worker masses' demands, was unable, as was said, to cope with all the tasks). Consequently the unions might become the basis of a National Industrial Council which "would be free to discuss and criticise, to investigate and suggest", but not to decide any economic matter.⁴

Even the compilers of the ILO's report of the Geneva Congress who embellished its achievements in every way, could not ignore the fact that it had "not succeeded in finding the new formula which will recreate the broken unity"⁵ of the international labour movement. On the contrary, the Congress not only turned down any hope for conciliation between labour parties, but worked out a political and economic programme for the Second International that was continually in contrast to the programme of the Third International: "London and Moscow are henceforward two antagonistic forces struggling for the supremacy over the working masses: the two poles round which the socialist forces will crystallise."⁶

The London International, as its supporters admitted, thus counted on deepening the split in the international labour movement, and set itself the task of counteracting by all means "the violent character of

¹ *The Congress of the Labour and Socialist International*, p. 27.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁶ *Ibid.*

the world upheaval in which they themselves were in danger of being swamped".¹ But it itself was no more than a "shadow", a "ghost" or a "rump" of the former Second International.

It is not surprising that the Geneva Congress could not arouse any enthusiasm not only in the masses, but even among the delegates, one of whom wrote: "The Second International ... assembled its delegates in Geneva in a dull hall to the complete indifference of the Geneva workers, who were vowed to Bolshevism. No festivities interrupted the proceedings... All delegates were oppressed by the feeling that the International Congress in Geneva had actually gathered the faithful and true and bound them close together, but that at the same time a second international congress under the communist colours in Moscow had held many back... In Moscow there were noisy ceremonies!"²

When a process of internal demarcation was going on in the Socialist parties of Europe, and many centrist leaders were trying to manoeuvre between the Second and Third Internationals in order to maintain their influence, the trade union leaders of the Amsterdam International decided to take the initiative themselves. Convinced that the London International was unable to put forward a programme that would attract proletarian masses gripped by revolutionary ferment, they convened a Special International Trades Union Congress in London on 22-27 November 1920. The 85 delegates represented union associations in 16 countries in Europe, plus Canada. The American Federation of Labor was not there, because Gompers, who nursed hatred of all Socialists and radicals, had classed the Amsterdam leaders among them, though they were just as anxious, if not more so, to deflect the trade union movement from the revolutionary road.³ Even without the AFL, however, the unions belonging to the International Federation of Trade Unions had 24,600,000 members at that time.⁴

In view of the impossibility of ignoring the proletarian masses' dissatisfaction that the bourgeoisie was making a postwar settlement at their expense and passing to the counter-offensive against their gains, the leaders of the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) came out with a detailed programme. Edo Fimmen's report on the international situation and the stand of the IFTU, and the resolution adopted by the congress, opposed intervention in

¹ Lewis L. Lorwin, *Labor and Internationalism*, Macmillan, New York, 1929, p. 210; see also Julius Braunthal, *Geschichte der Internationale*, Vol. 2, Verlag J.H.W. Dietz Nachf. GmbH, Hannover, 1963, p. 249.

² Adolf Braun, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

³ L.L. Lorwin, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-65.

⁴ *Report of the Special International Trades Union Congress held in London, November 22nd to 27th, 1920*, London, 1921, pp. 10, 14, 61.

Soviet Russia and the White Terror in Hungary, and stressed the need to fight for peace and to oppose all attempts to block implementation of the Convention of Washington on the eight-hour day. "The Trade Union movement, both national and international," the resolution said, "besides systematic pursuit for better conditions of labour, must combat Capitalism and Imperialism throughout the world." It also declared that the mass strike and international boycott were the most effective weapons for that purpose."¹

The report on the rate of exchange problem, prepared by a commission chaired by Léon Jouhaux, and the corresponding resolution, said that the congress recommended universal cancellation of war debts and abolition of unnecessary expenditure, especially on war needs, issue of an international reconstruction loan by the League of Nations, reduction of the emission of paper money, an agreed solution of the rate of exchange problem, etc. The resolution on "socialisation", moved by Jan Oudegeest, put forward a general demand for "socialisation" of the land, mineral wealth, and transport, worker participation in control over, and even in management of, the economy, declaring all that to be achievable on the soil of the capitalist system. On Mertens' report the congress decided to send the plan presented on "the distribution of raw materials for industrial purposes" to the International Labour Office.²

These high-sounding declarations were accompanied with a special resolution (moved by Georges Dumoulin) aimed against the International Trade Union Council recently set up in Moscow. While declaring that the IFTU assured affiliated bodies "of their autonomy and freedom of action", the resolution declared: "At the same time it forbids any obedience on their part to any resolutions from outside bodies to support their particular movements in the Trade Union International."³

Behind that quite muzzy formula lay an instruction that was used widely from then on in many countries to expel the revolutionary opposition from unions of the Amsterdam International. The French CGT was particularly active in that respect.

At the same time the Italian CGL, which had joined the International Trade Union Council in July 1920, took part as well in the London Congress of the Amsterdammers. At its congress in Livorno in February 1921, it is true, it took a decision to break with Amsterdam, but the growth of communist influence in the unions pushed its right-wing leaders into further contacts with Amsterdam and into stepping up their fight against the Communists in their ranks.⁴

¹ *Report of the Second International Trades Union Congress...*, pp. 12-18.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 38-41, 46-50, 55-58.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁴ Giorgio Candeloro, *Il movimento sindacale in Italia*, Edizione di cultura sociale, Rome, 1950, pp. 115-66.

The activation of trade unions in the international field also resulted in that a new, Catholic trade union centre emerged. In June 1920, 98 delegates from ten countries had formed the *International Federation of Christian Trade Unions* (IFCTU) at a congress in The Hague, which united 15 industrial secretariats. The Dutchman P. J. S. Serrarens became its general secretary. The economic programme adopted by its second congress (in Innsbruck in 1922) was based on the social doctrine of the Catholic Church, and called for the establishment "on catholic principles of a world social and economic order". The new organisation was hostile to the socialist movement and rejected both class, and even more, revolutionary struggle. It had more than three million members (1,400,000 in Germany, a million in Italy). There were IFCTU organisations as well in Holland, Belgium, Hungary, Spain, Austria, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia.¹

The fight that developed between reformists and revolutionary syndicalists in the trade union movement was an important part of the general struggle between the Second and Third Internationals for influence among the masses. The trade unions, the ECCI said, united tens of millions of proletarians, so that to win over to its side the trade unions meant to gain the support of the proletariat.²

The reformist union leaders' endeavours to get leadership of the international labour movement into their hands, however, were resisted by the leaders of centrist socialist parties. Kautsky advised all "rebuilders" and "reconstructionists" not to leave the Second International, or to return to it quickly, so as to avoid disastrous disunity of the movement or transfer of initiative to the trade unions.³ But other centrist leaders had already formed a more "cunning" plan to save the positions of Social-Democracy, that in essence, consisted in producing a general programme that would include the commonest demands of the revolutionary workers, while not in principle going beyond the limits of reform.

In the spring and summer of 1920 the centrist leaders of the French Socialist Party (SFIO) and the German Independents (USPD), who were in a very difficult position, since considerable numbers of workers were inclined toward the Comintern, had already discussed such a plan with Swiss Social-Democrats, and later with British and Austrians as well. At the end of October 1920 the British Independent Labour Party (ILP), and the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany proposed convening a conference of parties that were out-

¹ L.L. Lorwin, *op. cit.*, pp. 578-79, 596, 600; see also M.Y. Domnich, *Essays in the History of Christian Syndicalism*, Moscow, 1976, pp. 82-90 (in Russian).

² *The Communist International*, No. 17, 1921.

³ Karl Kautsky, *Vergangenheit und Zukunft der Internationale*, Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, Vienna, 1920, pp. 74-75, 86-88.

side both the Second and the Third Internationals (the Swiss Social-Democratic Party joined them in this proposal).

The ILP considered that this conference should discuss the founding of "a comprehensive international of the socialist movements of the world",¹ that would grant the labour movement of each country freedom of development in accordance with its economic and historical conditions. The German Independents pointed out the importance of joint discussion of the international situation and "the question of the International in connection with the situation created since the Second Congress of the Communist International". The Swiss Social-Democrats formulated the active task frankly as follows: parties that did not accept the Conditions of Admission to the Third International, but nevertheless wanted to be associated with it, should jointly try to get a revision of the conditions that "would provide the possibility of an international organisation of revolutionary labour parties". The Party Congress of the Austrian Social-Democrats, on 7 November 1920, also supported the convening of a conference to discuss ways and means of founding a "world organisation of the working class, uniting the broad masses of class-conscious proletarians of all countries".²

On the basis of all these proposals a preliminary conference met in Berne on 5-7 December 1920, in which the French SFIO, the German Social-Democrats of Czechoslovakia, and Russian Mensheviks took part as well as the initiating organisations. The appeal adopted lavishly reproduced the political demands of the broad proletarian masses, and contained even more radical phrases than the documents of the Amsterdamers. It spoke, for instance, of the need to rally all the forces of the world proletariat to struggle for "the socialist final demands", and suggested that "the proletariat must oppose its own world policy to the world supremacy of capital".³ The tasks of the struggle were declared to be the following: to vigorously defend Soviet Russia against the attacks of the imperialist Western powers, to help the revolutionary movements in East and Central Europe; to support the nationalities and colonial peoples fighting for their freedom; and to rally all the revolutionary forces of the world against the supremacy of imperialism.⁴

At the preliminary conference the delegates had decidedly dissociated themselves from all existing international organisations. The

¹ James Klugmann, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 165; *Report of the 29th Annual Conference of the I.L.P., March 28-29, 1921* (London, 1921).

² *Ezhegodnik Komintern*, Petrograd-Moscow, 1923, p. 33.

³ *Protokoll der Internationalen Sozialistischen Konferenz in Wien vom 22. bis. 27. Februar 1921*, Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, Vienna, 1921, p. 5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

Second International, they said, had perished; the London Second International (so-called) was incapable of uniting the living forces of the class-conscious proletariat and was "only an element destroying unity of the proletarian class struggle". A number of false accusations were made against the Comintern, which was said to be trying to saddle the labour parties of all lands with a "stereotype" of "the methods the Bolsheviks had employed in the proletarian-peasant revolution of Russia", to split the trade union movement and deprive it of any independence, and so on. Thus it proposed a kind of "intermediate" position, neither Social-Democratic nor Communist.

Needless to say, the authors of the appeal proclaimed themselves the only true revolutionaries, defenders of national and local uniqueness, and champions of a careful taking stock of "the actual maturity of the revolutionary situation" in each separate country. They declared themselves in favour even of establishing (sometimes) the proletarian dictatorship in various forms (workers', soldiers', and peasants' Soviets, trade union works committees, or local self-government bodies).¹

The ECCI, when characterising this appeal, noted that it implied an attempt to build a "new" International, not, moreover, "a second, or a third, but a two-and-a-half" one. There could be no question of organised acceptance by the Third International of the parties that backed this appeal, because, however they cloaked themselves in revolutionary phrases, they were and remained enemies of the proletarian revolution and Soviet Russia.² This estimate was soon fully confirmed by the whole course of the proceedings of the founding conference of the *International Working Union of Socialist Parties*, held in Vienna from 22 to 27 February 1921.

The seven parties that had signed the Berne appeal were now joined as well by the Russian Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, Social-Democrats of Yugoslavia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Hungary, and Poale Zion. Fritz Adler, opening the conference, spoke of the organisers' intention to draw a line against both Moscow's "naive impatience" and London's "sceptical disbelief" in the social revolution. Jean Longuet condemned both the "barracks' atmosphere" and the "soulless decadence". But it was soon made clear that the poisoned darts were aimed in one direction only, at the Comintern.

In Fritz Adler's central report "Methods and Organisation of the Class Struggle", there was no criticism of the stranglers of the revolution who called themselves "Socialists", only a reference to their "stupid reformist and fatalist democratic window-dressing", with which "we will never agree". Then a long catalogue of accusations

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 7.

² *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, No. 16, p. 3853.

was made against Communists, the main one being their alleged incorrect understanding of the historical prospect: Communists, he said, regarded World War I as "a lever of the revolution", but experience had shown that "with the present strength of the working class, victory of the proletariat cannot by any means be assured". He simply disregarded victory of the revolution in Russia, declaring that "the social revolution can only win when it succeeds first in the victor-countries, and when it succeeds in countries that are not industrially the poorest but are industrially the richest". Adler also added the direct lie that the Comintern was "an instrument of the foreign policy of the Soviet Republic" to his unconcealed spitefulness about victory of the revolution taking longer than the date predicted by Moscow. While admitting that defeat of Soviet Russia "would mean victory of world reaction", he primarily stressed differences with the Comintern about the outlook for the revolution.¹

By making a fetish of the thesis about the complexity and diversity of the conditions of the class struggle in various countries, he tried to devise some mean between "naive faith in democracy as the panacea" and "blind faith in the dictatorship as the sole possibility". That very posing of the matter already brought things back in fact to the position of the Second International, which counterposed "democracy in general" to dictatorship as such.

Adler explained his point more circumstantially from the experience of Austria. There, he said, they had had the possibility for two years of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, and, moreover, in any form they thought desirable: "*the bourgeoisie was disarmed and the proletariat was actually the stronger factor*". What had prevented establishment of worker power? Could the refusal to exploit such a rare opportunity be justified in any way? It appeared to him that it could and should: "And although the temptation to seize power was strong for the proletariat, especially at a moment when it had taken up the dictatorship in neighbouring lands, our proletariat stood firm." In ascribing such a strange "firmness" to the workers, it seemed to Adler that he had found not only an explanation for, but also a justification of, the stand of the Social-Democratic leaders (objectively equivalent to betrayal not only of neighbouring Soviet Hungary, but also of the possibilities of revolution in Austria itself and other European countries). In his words, the reason was "the instinctive and later quite conscious realisation that the question of power in a country did not depend simply on the balance of forces there alone, but depended on the balance of power of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the bordering lands, and in the whole world". Adler clearly saw only one negative aspect for the revolution in the international

¹ *Protokoll der Internationalen Sozialistischen Konferenz*, pp. 25-27, 29.

conditions, ignored the radical changes that had taken place in the world as a result of the October Revolution in Russia and consolidation of the position of Soviet Russia, and overestimated the Entente imperialists' chances, and even the strength of the capitalist system.

He also boasted that Austrian Social-Democracy had managed to avoid an internal split (as had happened in the parties of Germany, France, and Italy), that it had even succeeded in converting the workers' Soviets from formidable organs of the revolution into debating societies that could only "take joint decisions within modest limits". He also proposed the founding of a new International as a kind of "Working Union" rather than an international party.¹

During the ensuing debate one of the USPD leaders, Arthur Crispian, made an even sharper attack on the Comintern, and also added his contribution to emasculating the idea of Soviets, talking of the German experience of counterposing an "economic" and a "political system of Soviets". He also justified the proletariat's refusal to fight for power by reference to unfavourable international situation. Paul Faure, recalling that French Socialists had quit the Second International only after long vacillation, said that there was "nothing new" at all in the social struggle in the last few years. As that sounded rather retrograde, it evoked objections. The ILP delegate, Emanuel Shinwell, denied the importance of workers' councils certainly for Britain, if not for Germany and France, and demanded the granting of full autonomy to all parties in the new International. Zsigmond Kunfi exploited the tragic fate of Hungary to whitewash the right-wing Social-Democratic leaders. Not they, but objective circumstances and the Communists' "transfer of the methods of struggle of the Russian Revolution" and even—the apathy of the masses of the workers, were responsible for the death of the Soviet Republic in Hungary. The Hungarian Social-Democrats sent a detailed memorandum to the conference signed by the former People's Commissars Wilhelm Böhm, Alexander Garbai, Z. Kunfi, and Zoltán Rónai. They denied their responsibility for the defeat, and did not mention the backstage negotiations that they themselves had carried on with the Entente. They depicted the alliance with the Communists as forced; they, they said, while aware of the inevitability of the death of the proletarian dictatorship, had not wanted to take the road of "a counter-revolutionary policy à la Noske".² The speakers' hostility to the revolution and Soviet Russia was so obvious that, as Robert Grimm (Switzerland) remarked, the debate boiled down to "repulsion of attacks coming from Moscow", when it should have been one primarily of fighting the bourgeoisie.³

¹ *Protokoll...*, pp. 27-31.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42, 43, 47-49, 51, 121-31.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

During the discussion on imperialism and the social revolution (reporter R. C. Wallhead), and on the international struggle against counter-revolution (Georg Ledebour) many high-sounding words were spoken. Rudolph Hilferding waxed indignant at the crippling terms of the Treaty of Versailles for Germany. Kunfi protested at the Horthy terror. Otto Bauer described the disastrous situation of Austria, dependent on the charity of the Entente, and denied betrayal of the Hungarian revolution by his party. That, incidentally, did not prevent him from reading the French Socialists a lecture on the duty of internationalists first of all to criticise their own bourgeoisie, and their own imperialism, and to wage a resolute struggle against them.¹

The resolutions passed by the Vienna conference said that the aim of the International Working Union of Socialist Parties was to prepare the founding of an International that would unite *all* the revolutionary proletariat. The centrist position was formulated as a maxim that the International should not limit the proletariat's struggle "to the application of democratic methods as the so-called Second International does today" (the actions of its parties hostile to the revolution were "delicately" described thus), and not to prescribe for the proletariat "the stereotyped copy of the methods of the Russian peasants' and workers' revolution that the Communist International would impose" (so the latter's decisions were distorted). Although Ledebour, when closing the conference, denied "an eastern or western orientation" of the Vienna International, and the resolution contained a call to build "a revolutionary, proletarian united front against capitalism and imperialism" on a national and international scale,² the substance of the decisions left no doubt that the delegates had been firmly resolved to sail in the wake of social reformism.

Six months later Lenin wrote: "The gentlemen of the Two-and-a-Half International pose as revolutionaries, but in every serious situation they prove to be counter-revolutionaries because ... they have no faith in the forces of the working class."³ The development of the proletarian struggle in the West, and victory of the young Soviet Republic in the civil war, convincingly demonstrated that opportunism in any of its forms, even if in words advocating revolution and socialism (rid both of reformism and communist "stereotypes"), slowed down the pace of the revolutionary struggle.

Although several centres of the labour movement arose in the West in 1920 (the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals, and various international trade union organisations), two main currents in

¹ *Protokoll...*, pp. 78, 85-89, 95-97, 99-100.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 108, 112-13, 115.

³ V. I. Lenin., "New Times and Old Mistakes in a New Guise", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 25-26.

fact more and more obviously took shape: (a) the revolutionary, to which that part of the working class and its organisations formed under the watchwords of Communists belonged, and (b) the social-reformist, which in fact united the various contingents that took a stand rejecting revolution and struggle for workers' power. This split, generated by the policy of the right-wing leaders of the old Second International and sustained by their successors, weakened the offensive power of the international labour movement. And it helped the bourgeoisie to pass to the counter-offensive, which was not long in coming.

Chapter 8

THE WORKING CLASS AND THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT

THE COMINTERN AND THE NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTION

The victory of the October Revolution, and then Soviet power's success in fighting internal counter-revolution and foreign intervention, radically altered the situation in which the national liberation struggle of the peoples of colonial and dependent countries was developing. Soviet Central Asia, Kazakhstan, and Transcaucasia became the first areas in the world where colonialism was abolished through revolution. A practical interaction was thus established between the working class and national liberation movements, and between the fighters for social emancipation and for national freedom.

Early in this century, when analysing the contradictions of imperialism, Lenin had already not only pointed to the "awakening of Asia" but had also given a thorough substantiation of his conclusion that the national liberation revolutions would become an important factor in the downfall of imperialism. As the national liberation movement grew stronger in the colonial and dependent countries, it became more and more necessary to concretise that conclusion further. The Programme of the RCP(B), adopted by its Eighth Congress (in March 1919), said that development of the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie on an international scale "inevitably leads to a combination of civil wars within separate countries and revolutionary wars of both proletarian countries defending themselves and the oppressed nations against the yoke of the imperialist powers".¹ In the autumn of 1919 Lenin came back again to the idea of the necessity of combining the revolutionary streams, considering the liberation movements as a stage of revolutions in the East: "Revolt of the *proletariat* against the bourgeoisie of its own country + revolt of the *nations* in the colonies and dependent countries... A 'single' oppressor. Concentration of the struggle. Variety of stages."²

Developing this idea in his report to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East (November

¹ *Eighth Congress of the RCP(B). March 1919. Proceedings*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1959, p. 393 (in Russian).

² V. I. Lenin, "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30 1977, p. 102.

1919), he formulated the job facing the revolutionaries of colonial and dependent countries as follows: "The Russian Bolsheviks have succeeded in forcing a breach in the old imperialism, in undertaking the exceedingly difficult, but also exceedingly noble task of blazing new paths of revolution, whereas you, the representatives of the working people of the East, have before you a task that is still greater and newer."¹ It was now more obvious than before that the socialist revolution "will not be merely the victory of the proletariat of each country over its own bourgeoisie" but will also "be a struggle of all the imperialist-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries, against international imperialism".²

The period of wakening was giving way now to one of involvement of "all the Eastern peoples ... in deciding the destiny of the whole world", and the masses were rising as creators of a new life. "That is why," Lenin went on, "I think that in the history of the development of the world revolution—which, judging by its beginning, will continue for many years and will demand much effort ... to merge with our struggle against international imperialism." He did not hide the difficulties the revolutionaries of the East could expect. They first of all had to tackle a completely new task that had never before been presented: "Relying upon the general theory and practice of communism, you must adapt yourselves to specific conditions such as do not exist in the European countries; you must be able to apply that theory and practice to conditions in which the bulk of the population are peasants, and in which the task is to wage a struggle against medieval survivals and not against capitalism."³ There was experience of that kind already in Russia; it had to be broadened and boldly extended to more backward countries as well. "The Russian revolution," Lenin said, "showed how the proletarians, after defeating capitalism and uniting with the vast diffuse mass of working peasants, rose up victoriously against medieval oppression. Our Soviet Republic must now muster all the awakening people of the East and, together with them, wage a struggle against international imperialism."⁴ He considered an alliance of the socialist state, the working class of capitalist countries, and the national liberation movement to be objectively necessary for success of the world revolutionary fight against the united forces of imperialism. The nations of the East would have to play a decisive role in that alliance.

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East, November 22, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 159.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 160-61.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

Lenin also drew the attention of the revolutionaries of the East to the weakness and fewness of the industrial proletariat in their countries, and to the fact that the majority of their population were "not workers who have passed through the school of capitalist factories, but typical representatives of the working and exploited peasant masses who are victims of medieval oppression".¹

Another feature was that a national bourgeoisie was still only taking shape, and that revolutionaries would have to base themselves "on the bourgeois nationalism which is awakening, and must awaken among these people, and which has its historical justification".² They should therefore pay special attention to involving the broad masses of the working people in the struggle, and establishing mutual understanding with the revolutionary bourgeois nationalists and democrats. Lenin thus not only pointed out the specific alignment of the motive forces in the national liberation movement, but also plotted the direction for future analysis.

The Communist International concerned itself with this extremely important, intricate problem from its very foundation. Already its First Congress was attended by representatives of colonial and dependent countries despite the difficulties many of the delegates were faced with in getting to Soviet Russia. At the Founding Congress of the Comintern the working people of Turkey and Persia were represented by the Central Bureau of Communist Organisations of the Nations of the East. Representatives of the Chinese Socialist Labour Party and the Korean Labour Union were also present.³ The Comintern, having condemned the Berne International's rejection of the Social Democratic slogan of "Down with Colonies!", wrote into its own platform that it would "give support to the exploited colonial races in their fight against imperialism, so as to advance the ultimate overthrow of the imperialist world system".⁴

The Manifesto of the Comintern stressed that oppression of the nations of the colonies had immeasurably increased during the world war and that the fight against colonial slavery had taken on a clearly expressed social character in the most developed countries of the East. The liberation of the colonies was directly linked with victory of the working class of the metropolitan countries: "Colonial slaves of Africa and Asia!" it said. "The hour of proletarian dictatorship will also be the hour of your liberation!"⁵

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Address to the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East", November 22, 1919, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 162.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 162.

³ *The First Congress of the Communist International, March 1919, Moscow, 1933*, p. 251 (in Russian).

⁴ *The Communist International*, Petrograd, 1919, No. 1, p. 52.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

The further working out of problems about which (as Lenin said then) it was impossible at the time to read in any communist pamphlet, was linked with their collective discussion at the Second Congress of the Comintern, in which representatives of Marxist parties and groups in China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Korea, and Turkey took part, as well as Communists of Western countries. Lenin himself took on the drafting of the initial rough of the theses on the national and colonial questions, which were given to all the delegates with a request for the amendments and additions needed for fuller clarification of what he called "these very complex problems".¹ He received suggestions from a number of Soviet party functionaries and representatives of Bulgaria, Germany and the countries of the East, and used part of them in his speeches.²

In his theses Lenin first of all clearly formulated the premises that differentiated the communist approach to the national and colonial questions in principle from the bourgeois-democratic, reformist and sectarian approaches, and showed that the following were absolutely necessary: "first, ... a precise appraisal of the specific historical situation and, primarily, of economic conditions; second, ... a clear distinction between the interests of the oppressed classes, of working and exploited people, and the general concept of national interests as a whole, which implies the interests of the ruling class; third, ... an equally clear distinction between the oppressed, dependent and subject nations and the oppressing, exploiting and sovereign nations".³ He considered that "the Communist International's entire policy ... should rest primarily on a closer union of the proletarians and the working masses of all nations and countries for a joint revolutionary struggle to overthrow the landowners and the bourgeoisie."⁴

The paramount internationalist duty of the workers and Communists of the advanced countries in this joint fight (especially of those countries on which backward nations were colonially and financially dependent) was to give direct, very active help to "the revolutionary movements among the dependent and underprivileged nations (for example, Ireland, the American Negroes, etc.) and in the colonies". As for the most backward nations with a predominance of "feudal or patriarchal and patriarchal-peasant relations", it should be a matter, he considered, of going to the aid of "the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement".⁵

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1974, p. 144.

² *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No. 2, 1958.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1974, p. 145.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 145-46.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 148-49.

Lenin called for close, thorough consideration of the historical, national, and social features of liberation movements, active support of their revolutionary trends, exposure of opportunist appraisals, and at the same time resolute struggle against any "attempts to give a communist colouring to bourgeois-democratic liberation trends in the backward countries". Communists needed to build their own organisations, and to "enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in the colonial and backward countries, but should not merge with it, and should under all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement, even if it is in its most embryonic form".¹ In order to influence the masses who were being drawn into the national liberation movement, Communists and those who meant to found communist parties should immediately develop propaganda for the idea of peasant Soviets, Soviets of the exploited, Soviets of the working people. Lenin advised taking into account the experience of the Russian Communists' work in the former colonies of Czarist Russia, Turkestan for example, and other regions where pre-capitalist relations predominated, where there was almost no industrial proletariat, and where, therefore, there could be no question of a purely proletarian movement. Russian workers had thus had to take on the role of leaders of the reforms. They were able "to inspire in the masses an urge for independent political thinking and independent political action"². Experience had shown that peasants who were still in semi-feudal dependence "can easily assimilate and give effect to the idea of Soviet organisation" because it is simple and just as applicable, "not only to proletarian, but also to peasant feudal and semi-feudal relations".³

This new approach was brought about by the situation that had taken shape in the world through the victory of the October Revolution, when the main contradiction of the epoch had become that between imperialism and socialism. Now, Lenin emphasised, "world political developments are of necessity concentrated on a single focus—the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against the Soviet Russian Republic, around which are inevitably grouped, on the one hand, the Soviet movements of the advanced workers in all countries, and, on the other, all the national liberation movements in the colonies and among the oppressed nationalities, who are learning from bitter experience that their only salvation lies in the Soviet system's victory over world imperialism".⁴

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 149-50.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 243.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 146.

Lenin's principled posing of the national and colonial questions met with general approval, but it was quite difficult to reconcile the various points of view on three vital issues: (a) the place of the revolution in the East in the world revolutionary process; (b) its character; and especially (c) the attitude to bourgeois democracy.¹

Among the Western parties, the most markedly negative attitude toward supporting the bourgeois-democratic movement in the colonies was expressed by members of the Italian delegation². A. Graziadei tried to replace the thesis on active support for this movement by a statement about "active interest" in it. Serrati even frankly declared that in general he considered any national liberation activity of bourgeois-democratic groups not to be revolutionary but activity serving the interests of imperialism. "The genuine revolution of oppressed nations can be achieved only with the help of proletarian revolution and Soviet power," he said, "and not through the support, even if indirect, in the form of temporary alliances, by Communists of bourgeois parties called national-revolutionary parties. Such alliances will muddle the consciousness of the proletariat especially in countries where there are few people experienced in the fight with capitalism"³.

The logic of this position was particularly formal and superficial. It ignored the fact that, in view of the immaturity of the objective conditions (a proletarian vanguard had not yet even been formed in them), a directly proletarian revolution was impossible in backward countries. At the same time the national liberation movement, led by the national bourgeoisie, had a great revolutionary, above all anti-imperialist, potential. In those circumstances refusal to support this movement was not at all a "pure" proletarian class line, as Ser-

¹ For further details see: *The Comintern and the East. The Struggle for the Leninist Strategy and Tactics in National Liberation Movements* (further on *The Comintern and the East...*), Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1979; *The Comintern and the East. A Critique of the Critique. The Falsifiers of Leninist Strategy and Tactics in the National Liberation Movement Exposed*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, pp. 88-107.

Lenin and the National Liberation Movement in the Countries of the East, Moscow, 1970, pp. 68-71; N. E. Korolev, "Lenin's Development of the Comintern's Policy on the National and Colonial Questions", in *The Second Congress of the Comintern. Development by the Congress of Ideological, Tactical and Organizational Foundations of Communist Parties*, Moscow, 1972, pp. 171-90; A.B. Reznikov, *The Communist International's Strategy and Tactics on the National and Colonial Question. Problems of Theory and History*, Moscow, 1978, pp. 71-106; P. M. Shastitko, *Lenin's Theory of the National and Colonial Questions: History of Its Formation*, Moscow, 1979, pp. 190-207 (all in Russian).

² Lenin, knowing the position of the Italian comrades, expressed perplexity, in a note to Serrati, why none of them had come to defend it in the colonial commission (V. I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, 5th Russian Edition, Vol. 51, p. 244).

³ *The Second Congress of the Comintern. July-August 1920* (further on *The Second Congress ...*), Moscow, 1934, pp. 121-122, 155 (in Russian).

rati maintained, but sectarian withdrawal from revolutionary action. The congress did not manage to qualify the position of Serrati and Graziadei without harsh words.¹

Things were much more complicated as regards the stand of many Communists from countries of the East, who erred toward "leftism". They believed that the time had come to speed up revolutionary events, and to establish "proletarian power", perhaps by armed force, in India, Iran, and several other countries. Some even plotted a military march on India from Central Asia. In thinking thus the "leftists" were sincerely convinced that the Comintern should support only those who declared themselves Communists, and not the national liberation movements in which the broad masses (including the national bourgeoisie) were involved. With regard to these views, Lenin proposed to the Indian Communist, M. N. Roy, that they reach preliminary agreement and present his (Roy's) theses as supplementary ones to the congress commission. He suggested a number of amendments to them, which Roy accepted. As the latter subsequently recalled "the role of Gandhi was the crucial point of difference" during the talk, other things apart. Roy maintained that Gandhi "was bound to be a reactionary socially, however revolutionary he might appear politically". Lenin considered that Gandhi, "as the inspirer and leader of a mass movement ... was a revolutionary"².

At the session of the commission on the national and colonial questions, which was held under Lenin's chairmanship on July 25, the discussion (in which delegates from Korea, China, India, Persia, Great Britain and other countries took part) primarily concerned the issue of Communists' support for a revolutionary movement in colonies and semi-colonies that was headed by bourgeois elements. From the summary records: "Comrade Roy concluded that it was necessary to delete from point 11 of the theses on the national question the paragraph that spoke of the need for all communist parties to help the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement in Eastern countries. The Communist International should exclusively help the founding and development of a communist movement in India, and the Communist Party of India should be exclusively concerned with organising the broad masses to struggle for their class interests".³

At a commission session, overemphasising the role of the Eastern countries in the world revolutionary process, India included, Roy also stated that the destiny of the revolutionary movement in Europe entirely depended on the course of the revolution in the

¹ *The Second Congress...*, pp. 155-61.

² *M. N. Roy's Memoirs*, Allied Publishers Private Ltd., Bombay, 1964, p. 379.

³ *Vestnik Vtorogo kongressa Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala*, No. 1, 1920, pp. 1-2.

East. Without the victory of the revolution in Eastern countries the communist movement in the West may be reduced to nought. For its resources and incomes world capitalism relies mainly on the colonies, Asia above all. So it was necessary to direct all energy into developing the revolutionary movement in the East and to adopt it as the main thesis that the destiny of world communism depends on the triumph of communism in the East.¹

In opposing that point of view Lenin said: "Indian Communists should support the bourgeois-democratic movement, without merging with it. Comrade Roy goes too far when he claims that the fate of the West depends exclusively on the degree of development and strength of the revolutionary movement in Eastern countries. In spite of the fact that India has five million proletarians and 37 million landless peasants, Indian Communists have not yet managed to build a Communist Party in the country and for that reason alone Comrade Roy's views are largely unfounded."² The Persian delegate, A. Sultan-Zade, also raised objections to Roy on this issue, though he belonged to the "Lefts"³.

Lenin spent a great deal of time explaining to the Communists of the Orient the essence of the Marxian tenets on the national and colonial question. The amendments that he introduced to Roy's theses removed the point about revising established ideas on the possible path of the world revolution and an "Asian road" of its development. In accordance with Lenin's formulation, the accent was put on joint, united actions of both revolutionary currents.

The speakers in the discussion unanimously agreed to replace the words "bourgeois-democratic" by the concept "national-revolutionary" movement. When explaining the sense of this change Lenin said that there was no doubt that "any national movement can only be a bourgeois-democratic movement, since the overwhelming mass of the population in the backward countries consist of peasants".⁴ Communists, however, should not support all such movements, but only those that were really revolutionary.

When reporting to the plenary session of the congress on the commission's work, Lenin pointed out that both his original theses (with amendments), and M. N. Roy's supplementary ones had been unanimously accepted, so that "we have ... reached complete unanimity on

¹ *Ibid.* He was not the only one to express similar views at the time. The eminent orientalist M. P. Pavlovich, for instance, wrote that "separation of the colonies from the metropolitan countries would deal a mortal blow to capitalism and break its back" (M. Pavlovich, M. Volonter [Mikhail Veltman], *Problems of the Colonial and National Policy of the Third International*, Moscow, 1920, p. 58 (in Russian)).

² *Vestnik Vtorogo kongressa*, No. 1, 1920, p. 2.

³ *The Second Congress...*, p. 119.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International, July 19-August 7, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 241.

all major issues". Lenin saw the real significance of Roy's theses in the fact that they had been written mainly "from the standpoint of the situation in India and other big Asian countries oppressed by Britain".¹ They now spoke frankly about the co-operation of Communists and bourgeois national liberation elements,² but in Lenin's theses it was the need to "establish temporary relations and even unions with the revolutionary movements in the colonies and backward countries, without however amalgamating with them".³ Thus, as a result of Lenin's efforts, a thought was crystallised that can be regarded as the original formulation of the idea of a united anti-imperialist front.

During the discussion on the national and colonial question in the congress other major theoretical theses and practical recommendations were also worked out.

Serious debates developed on the issue of the outlook for the development of former colonies. "The question was posed as follows," Lenin said: "Are we to consider as correct the assertion that the capitalist stage of economic development is inevitable for backward nations now on the road to emancipation and among whom a certain advance towards progress is to be seen since the war? We replied in the negative. If the victorious revolutionary proletariat conducts systematic propaganda among them, and the Soviet governments come to their aid with all the means at their disposal—in that event it will be mistaken to assume that the backward peoples must inevitably go through the capitalist stage of development". The Communist International, he concluded, "should advance the proposition, with the appropriate theoretical grounding, that with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage".⁴

This conclusion, which is a constructive development of the ideas of Marx and Engels applied to the new historical conditions, opened real prospects before many nations of building a socialist system without their passing through the "full cycle" of capitalist development, and oriented backward countries on an alliance with the international proletariat, above all with the country of victorious socialism.

The congress paid much attention to the principle of proletarian

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International, July 19-August 7, 1920", *Collected Works*, pp. 240-41.

² *The Second Congress of the Communist International*, p. 578. See also *Der zweite Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale*, Verlag der Arbeiter-Buchhandlung, Vienna, 1920, p. 155.

³ *The Second Congress of the Communist International*, pp. 574-75.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 244.

internationalism and its concrete interpretation in the colonies and semi-colonies of imperialism. Lenin demanded of Communists unconditional recognition of the right to self-determination, and at the same time called on them to fight uncompromisingly against both the refusal of some of the workers of the metropolitan countries to help the oppressed nations in their uprisings against imperialism, and "the deeprooted petty-bourgeois national prejudices" (race hatred, national victimisation, and anti-Semitism), national egoism, Pan-Asianism, Pan-Islamism, Zionism, etc. He called on them, too, to exercise "special caution and care with regard to ... national sentiments still surviving", and to make certain concessions. "The victory over capitalism cannot be fully achieved and carried to its ultimate goal unless the proletariat and the toiling masses of all nations of the world rally of their own accord in a concordant and close union."¹

On the whole the Second Congress of the Comintern made a major contribution to developing vital problems of the labour and liberation movement in imperialism's colonies and semi-colonies. In addition to the decisions on the agrarian and peasant problem, the resolutions adopted made an important contribution to working out the international communist movement's strategy and tactics, the problems of hegemony of the proletariat in the world revolutionary process and the role of its allies in it.

A significant step toward concrete uniting of the international labour movement and the national liberation struggle of the peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies was the First Congress of the Peoples of the East convened by the ECCI in Baku (1-8 September 1920). This was a representative forum in which around 2,050 delegates took part, and which was attended by Communists from Europe, America, and Asia, and representatives of the national movements and petty-bourgeois parties of 45 nationalities. Its agenda included the following: the international situation and the tasks of the working masses of the East; the national and colonial question; the agrarian question; Soviet construction in the East, etc.² Its organisers included G. E. Zinoviev, G. K. Orjonikidze, E. D. Stasova, N. N. Narimanov, A. I. Mikoyan, and H. G. Sultan-Galiev.

In a spirit of great enthusiasm the congress demonstrated the delegates' support for the Comintern's decisions, and the urge of the peoples of the colonies and dependent countries to put them into practice. It was there that the watchword "Workers of All Countries and All Oppressed Nations, Unite!" was heard for the first time. When Lenin was asked about it later, he replied: "Of

¹ *The Second Congress of the Communist International*, pp. 573, 575.

² For further details see: G. Z. Sorkin, *First Congress of the Peoples of the East*, Moscow, 1961; P. M. Shastitko, "The Comintern and the First Congress of the Peoples of the East", in *Narodny Azii i Afriki*, No. 2, 1979 (both in Russian).

course, the modification is wrong from the standpoint of the *Communist Manifesto*, but then the *Communist Manifesto* was written under entirely different conditions. From the point of view of present-day politics, however, the change is correct.”¹

The congress adopted a Manifesto to the Peoples of the East, and messages to the workers of Europe, America, and Japan calling for resolute struggle against colonialism and racism. The Bulgarian delegate N. Shablin expressed the central idea of all the speeches and resolutions as follows: “To the united front of the imperialist oppressors we opposed the united front of the oppressed and enslaved nations of the whole world.” The Propaganda and Action Council elected by the congress, with the job of supporting and uniting the liberation movements, included many outstanding representatives of the revolutionary movement of the countries of the East.²

Lenin estimated the significance of uniting the working people of West and East as follows: “That which was achieved by the congress of Communists in Moscow and by the Baku congress of Communist representatives of the peoples of the East cannot be immediately assessed or directly calculated, but it has been an achievement of greater significance than some military victories are, because it proves to us that the Bolsheviks’ experience, their activities and programme, and their call for a revolutionary struggle against the capitalists and imperialists have won world-wide recognition.”³

At the same time some of the delegates expressed pronounced leftist views. They considered it possible, for instance, to give the revolution in the East a “push” from “outside”, exaggerated the scale and depth of the revolutionary movement, and considered Asia the centre where the fate of the world revolution was being decided. The report on the position in India presented to the ECCI early in 1921 by M. N. Roy was also indicative of the hardness of leftist moods and ideas among some of the Communists of Eastern countries. In his view the movement in India had only a national colouring, but in fact had a proletarian, revolutionary character. This clear overestimate of the depth of the revolutionary movement

¹ V. I. Lenin, “Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Activists of the Moscow Organisation of the R.C.P.(B.), December 6, 1920”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 453.

² *First Congress of the Peoples of the East. Baku, 1-8 September 1920. Verbatim Report*, Petrograd, 1920, p. 107 (in Russian). Forty-eight representatives of 21 nationalities were elected to the Council. It issued a journal *Narody Vostoka* (Peoples of the East) in Russian, Turkish, Persian, and Arabic. A Communist University of the Working People of the East was founded in Moscow in 1921 in co-operation with the Council (see P. M. Shastitko, *art. cit.*, p. 48).

³ V. I. Lenin, “Speech Delivered at a Conference of Chairmen of Uyezd, Volost and Village Executive Committees of Moscow Gubernia, October 15, 1920”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 330.

was not supported by the ECCI, which rejected the conception proposed.¹ Later Roy and Sultan-Zade developed their own drafts of theses which they presented to the Third Congress of the Comintern, in which they again exaggerated the strength and possibilities of the national liberation movement in the East. But the commission set up by the congress on the eastern question resolved "to preserve the principles worked out last year" and not to adopt a special resolution.²

On the initiative of the Comintern the First Congress of Peoples of the Far East was held in Moscow in January and February 1922, at which representatives of revolutionary organisations and groups from China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, and the peoples of Siberia were present. The congress expressed its solidarity with the decisions of the Comintern's congresses on the national and colonial questions, passed several resolutions in which concrete measures were envisaged for establishing unity of action of the working people in the fight against imperialism and colonial oppression. The actions of the workers of Japan were to have an important place in this struggle. The congress declared that "only in alliance with the international proletariat can the labouring masses of the Far East enslaved by imperialism win their national and social liberation".³ This congress was an important practical step toward concretising and carrying out the decisions of the Second Congress of the Comintern.

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International, which made a circumstantial analysis of the state of the continually growing national liberation struggle, was of great significance for the development of the labour movement in dependent and colonial countries. In appraising the existing situation the congress pointed out that "the Communist and working-class parties in the colonies and semi-colonial countries are confronted by a two-fold task: on the one hand, to fight for the most radical solutions of the problems of bourgeois democratic revolution, directed to the conquest of political independence, and, on the other, to organise the workers and peasants to fight for their special class interest, during which they must take advantage of the antagonism existing in the nationalist bourgeois democratic camp".⁴

¹ *The Third Congress of the Comintern. Working out of the Political Line of the Communist Movement. Communists and the Masses*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 34-36 (in Russian).

² *Third World Congress of the Communist International. Verbatim Report*, Petrograd, 1922, p. 479 (in Russian).

³ *The Communist International. A Short Historical Essay*, Moscow, 1969, p. 181 (in Russian).

⁴ *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, Held in Moscow, Nov. 7 to Dec. 3, 1922*, publ. for CPGB, London, 1922, p. 58.

The congress considered that the paramount task of the working class in the East was to create the nucleus of Communist parties in colonies and semi-colonies that would support national liberation uprisings in every way and fight for hegemony of the proletariat, stimulate socialist consciousness among the workers and activate their movement for their rights. It stressed the need to put forward slogans that would promote contact between the peasant and semi-proletarian masses and the working class, and consolidate the alliance between the international proletariat and the Soviet republics. The Theses on the Eastern Question said that the proletariat of colonial countries could only prepare itself for the role of political leader through long work both with regard to itself and the adjacent social strata. They warned that "the refusal of the Communists in the colonies to participate against imperialist oppression on the pretext of alleged 'defence' of independent class interest, is opportunism of the worst kind calculated only to discredit the proletarian revolution in the East. Not less harmful must be recognised the attempt to isolate oneself from the immediate and everyday interests of the working class for the sake of 'national unity' or 'civil peace.' with bourgeois democrat".

The congress put forward the watchword of a *united anti-imperialist front* as the central slogan of the liberation struggle in the colonial East. In its view the programme of this front should contain the following demands: the winning of national independence; the proclamation of a republic; the abolition of all and every feudal right and privilege, the carrying out of an agrarian reform; the adoption of progressive labour legislation, and democratisation of public affairs, etc. In the aggregate these demands constituted the substance of an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution. The main condition for successful implementation of the programme was to establish a firm alliance of the anti-imperialist revolutions in the East with the Soviet republics and the international labour movement.

When characterising the diversity of the socio-economic and political conditions in colonial and dependent countries, the congress defined the anti-imperialist potential of the various strata and groups of the population: the proletariat, then few in numbers and poorly organised; the broad masses of the peasantry and urban poor; the national bourgeoisie. While noting the inconsistency of the position, and the selfish aims of the national bourgeoisie in the democratic revolution, the congress pointed out as well its self-interest in carrying out the basic tasks of the revolution.

Developing Lenin's theses on national liberation revolutions,

¹ *Resolutions and Theses of the Communist International, Held in Moscow, Nov. 7 to Dec. 3, 1922*, p. 58.

the congress came to an important conclusion: "The labour movement in the colonies and semi-colonial countries must first of all secure for itself the position of an independent factor in the common Anti-Imperialist Front. Only on the basis of recognition of this independence and the maintenance of complete independence is a temporary agreement with bourgeois democracy permissible and necessary."¹

It drew Communists' attention to the agrarian and peasant question in the East. The peasantry was a natural ally of the proletariat, and its role in colonies and semi-colonies was particularly great. Without a firm alliance of the working class and peasantry there could be no successful national liberation and revolutionary movements. In order to establish such an alliance it was necessary to put the problems of abolishing feudalism and its survivals in the economy before the broad masses in a clear, distinct way, understandable to them. The Fourth Congress obliged the Communists of the East to extend and consolidate their ties with the masses and to take part in every movement giving them access to the masses. Its working out of the tactics of the united anti-imperialist front substantially enriched the theory of the world revolutionary process.

The congress adopted a special resolution on the Negro question which said that the enemy of the Negro race and the enemy of the white workers were one and the same, viz., capitalism and imperialism. The Comintern, considering itself not just the revolutionary representative of the white workers and peasants of Europe and America, "but equally the organisation of the oppressed coloured peoples of the world", called for the building of an international liberation movement "in America, as the centre of negro culture and the crystallisation of negro protest, in Africa, the reservoir of human labour for the further development of capitalism; in Central America (Costa Rica, Guatemala, Colombia, Nicaragua and other 'independent' republics), where American imperialism dominates; in Porto Rico, Haiti, Santo Domingo and other islands washed by the waters of the Caribbean, where the brutal treatment of our black fellow-men by the American occupation has aroused the protest of the conscious negro and the revolutionary white workers everywhere."²

In addition to its collective working out of the main theoretical problems, the Comintern systematically gave great practical aid to the labour movement of the various countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Above all it fostered organisation of the van-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 86.

guard of the working class—the formation of independent communist and workers' parties, whose foundation marked the birth of the modern communist movement. In underdeveloped countries this was a more complicated and difficult process than in the countries of the West.

In a talk with the delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic that visited him at the end of 1921, Lenin welcomed the formation of the People's Revolutionary Party, the party of the Mongolian *arats*; when asked whether it should be transformed into a Communist Party, he replied: "I should not recommend it, because one party cannot be 'transformed' into another.... The revolutionaries will have to put in a good deal of work in developing state, economic and cultural activities before the herdsman elements become a proletarian mass, which may eventually help to 'transform' the People's Revolutionary Party into a Communist Party. A mere change of signboards is harmful and dangerous."¹

At the time of the Second Congress of the Comintern there were already parties in Argentina, Mexico, Iran, Turkey, Indonesia, and Egypt, and Algerian and Tunisian sections of the Communist Party of France. In the years following parties were formed in Australia, the Union of South Africa, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Cuba, China and India.

When joining the Communist International parties took on a voluntary obligation to work in this organisation of the Communists of the world, while the Comintern for its part treated parties as fraternal and equal. Each party taking part in its work made the contribution within its power to tackling the problems of the world revolutionary movement and received unselfish aid from the other parties, taking their experience into account, and helping them in their struggle.

The formation of communist parties and their uniting in the Comintern helped activate the forces of national liberation, and encouraged growth of the workers' political awareness.

Already at the beginning of the 1920s many communist parties by their selfless struggle against imperialism and colonialism and for national independence introduced organisation and a sense of purpose into the mass movement, which created the necessary preconditions for the future emancipation of oppressed nations.

At the same time the Communist International oriented all parties on a far-reaching study and thorough estimate of the level of social and national development reached on one continent or another, in each region, and in each separate country. Lenin and the Comin-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Talk with a Delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, 1969, pp. 360-61.

tern repeatedly warned Communists that a mechanical borrowing of the forms and methods of struggle of the more developed countries could lead to failure in countries with backward social relations, and could even discredit the very idea of socialism.

THE CLASS BATTLES OF THE LATIN AMERICAN PROLETARIAT

Most of the countries of Latin America occupied an intermediate place, as regards their socio-economic relations and level of political development, between capitalist countries and the semi-colonies (among which Lenin distinguished China, Persia, and Turkey in Asia).¹ By the beginning of the twentieth century the countries of Latin America had been turned into agrarian-raw material appendages of the imperialist powers. Although capitalism had also become a determining factor in their social and economic development, they continued to bear the burden of survivals of precapitalist relations. Differences in level and rates of development of the different countries had also become marked already at the turn of the century. Some had completed the process of class formation characteristic of capitalist society (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Uruguay); in others capitalism was still cutting its way through thickets of feudal and semi-feudal regimes (Bolivia, Paraguay, and the Central American Republics). In that connection both the maturity of the class contradictions and the forms of struggle of the labouring masses differed in the various areas of Latin America.

The formation of a proletariat as a class had been completed in the main in Latin America during the First World War. In Argentina there were more than 400,000 industrial workers, in Brazil 300,000; in Mexico up to 500,000 were employed in industry and transport. The numbers of wage-earners had grown rapidly in the other countries as well. The composition of the proletariat changed; the falling off of European immigration led to an increase in the proportion of local people. The skeleton of a factory proletariat took shape from second-generation workers, born on American soil, and barriers between nationalities were wiped out. The trade union movement grew stronger in Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, and Uruguay, and political organisations of a socialist trend increased. Some of these, for example the Socialist Labour Party of Chile, developed on a predominantly Marxian basis. But the labour movement as a whole remained under the strong influence of anarchist, syndicalist, and reformist tendencies.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, pp. 257-58.

The truth about the Russian Revolution got to Latin America across police cordons and via the distortions of the capitalist press. It aroused the workers' enthusiasm, stimulating them to intensify the revolutionary struggle, and impelled Latin American revolutionaries to look anew at their own experience of class struggles. In 1917-18 the revolutionary upswing spreading from Russia had already gripped Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Mexico, Uruguay, and other countries.

The struggle of the workers of *Argentina* was the deepest and broadest in those years. At the beginning of the century Argentina had gone further along the capitalist road of development than the other countries of South America, but the dominant position was held not by national capital but by foreign. At the end of World War I US companies owned 58.5 per cent of the meat-packing industry, the most important branch of the Argentine economy. 29 per cent belonged to British capital, and only 12 per cent to local capitalists.¹ The proletariat's struggle therefore had an objectively anti-imperialist direction from the very start.

In January 1919 the strike wave rose particularly high. In Buenos Aires a general strike began in reply to an attack by police provocateurs on a workers' meeting. The funeral of the victims of this attack became a 200,000-strong demonstration, against which arms were again used. The workers seized an arsenal and fought on barricades against the police and troops. The uprising was only put down by the use of artillery; the casualties on the barricades were more than 5,000 killed and wounded. The defeat of the workers of Buenos Aires was largely due to the indecision of the anarchist leaders, who began to negotiate with the government in secret from the workers. In 1921 the authorities again resorted to armed force, this time against farm workers in Patagonia. The sharper the strike struggle became the more noticeably the leaders of the proletariat's political and trade union organisations displayed an incapacity to take the lead of the movement and direct it along a revolutionary road. The crisis in the leadership was aggravated by differences in evaluating the October Revolution.

The "Lefts" in the Socialist Party of Argentina had welcomed the October Revolution with enthusiasm and taken a stand of developing a movement of solidarity with Soviet Russia. Their dissociation from the right wing quickened; the latter, however, grew through an influx of petty-bourgeois elements into the party.² And while the leaders of an opportunist trend (De Tomaso, Juan B. Justo, and others) did not stop at straight lies about the Bolsheviks, the

¹ *Essays on the History of Argentina*, Moscow, 1961, p. 276 (in Russian).

² Francisco Muñoz Díez, "A cincuenta años del 'frentismo'", *Nueva era* (Buenos Aires), No. 9, 1973, pp. 252-56.

"Lefts" became more and more aware of the need to build a really revolutionary party of the working class. In January 1918 they founded the Internationalist Socialist Party, which declared its adhesion to the Comintern in April 1919, and began to be called the Communist Party of Argentina from December 1920. It was led by such outstanding revolutionaries as Rodolfo Ghioldi, Victorio Codovilla, Luis Recabarren, A. Kuhn, and E. Müller. The Argentine Communists, firmly adhering to the line developed by the Comintern, resolutely fought reformist and syndicalist views within their ranks.¹ Their newspaper *La Internacional* campaigned for a monthly contribution of a half-day's pay by workers to its funds, which gave it the opportunity to come out as a daily. That enabled the Communist Party of Argentina to organise an exchange of experience with the Communists of other Latin American countries.

In March 1922 the Unión Sindical Argentina was founded, and was joined by most of the trade unions, especially those in which Communists held leading positions. But its leadership was not free of syndicalist views, supported opponents of a united front, and declared their "independence" of political parties and international centres.² This stand had a negative effect on the workers' struggle.

There was also a mounting class struggle in *Uruguay*. In May 1917 a strike broke out in the meat-packing area of Cerro. Since the blow hit the most important industry of the country, the authorities immediately took tough measures, without waiting for the strike to sweep the country. Troops were moved against the demonstrators; arrests of militant workers began, and the premises of labour organisations were closed. In reply to the authorities' actions the main trade union association (the Regional Workers' Federation of Uruguay) called a 48-hour strike on May 27. It did not, however, have links with the non-proletarian strata of the working people and the peasant movement, and organised only separate actions of different groups of workers. The authorities were able to cope with the strikers in the slaughterhouses, and to beat down the strike wave.

After the October Revolution feelings of warm sympathy for the Russian proletariat began to grow among the working class of Uruguay. The police broke up meetings of solidarity with revolutionary Russia by force. In 1918-1919 a wave of strikes again swept the country, involving the meat-packing workers in the slaughterhouses and cold stores, the ports, and the textile mills. A distinct gulf developed between the fighting mood of the masses and the opportunist line of the leaders of the labour organisations (right-

¹ Rubens Iscaro, *Historia del movimiento sindical*, Vol. 4, *El movimiento sindical argentino*, Editorial ciencias del hombre, Buenos Aires, 1974, p. 17.

² R. Ghioldi, *Selected Articles and Speeches*, Moscow, 1974, p. 36 (in Russian).

wing Socialists, anarchists, and syndicalists). The effect of the bourgeois-nationalist doctrine of "batllismo" (so-called after President Batlle y Ordóñez) was also negative, based as it was on the preaching of class peace.¹ That forced Uruguayan Socialists to make a serious review of their ideological and political position. The proletariat's victory in Russia made a big impression on the "lefts", they also had before them the example of the Left Argentine Socialists, who had broken with opportunism and joined the Communist International. The discussion preceding the Eighth Congress of the Socialist Party of Uruguay (September 1920) showed that the majority of rank-and-file members stood for its adopting communist positions. The right-wing Socialists, led by Emilio Frugoni, were forced to retreat. In April 1921 an Extraordinary Congress of the Party voted by an overwhelming majority to rename it the Communist Party of Uruguay and to adopt the conditions of admission to the Comintern.² This convincing victory of the Left Socialists was due to the fact that the Uruguayan Socialist Party (unlike the Argentine) had been weakly linked with the Second International, and that reformist leaders had no standing in it.³ The Communist Party of Uruguay was represented at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern by a full delegate.

In Chile the miners, who had suffered badly in the famine year of 1918, played a leading role in the revolutionary struggle. In several places their actions developed into bloody battles. In January 1919 the workers of Puerto Natales, taking to arms, held control of the town for several days. And the 100,000-strong demonstration in Santiago in August 1919 against hunger and poverty made an immense impression in the country. Strikes and demonstrations continued in the following years; the strikes of the saltpetre miners against the closing of the mines in San Gregorio in 1921, which were drowned in blood, were particularly significant.

The position of the left wing of the Socialist Labour Party of Chile, which was led by Luis E. Recabarren, a leading figure in the labour movement of all Latin America, was strengthened. It carried the main trade union centre, the Labour Federation of Chile, with it, which joined the Profintern in 1921. In January 1922 the Socialist Labour Party was converted at its Fourth Congress in Rancagua into the Communist Party of Chile and joined the Communist International. The party's very close ties with the labour movement were of great significance from the start for its formation

¹ B. I. Koval, S. I. Semyonov, A. F. Shulgovsky, *Revolutionary Processes in Latin America*, Moscow, 1974, p. 163 (in Russian).

² The date of the founding of the party is taken as 21 September 1920.

³ Francisco R. Pintos, *Historia del movimiento obrero del Uruguay*, Montevideo, 1960, p. 161.

as a party of the new type; it was the most proletarian party in Latin America in membership.

In *Brazil* strikes began in June 1917 in the State of São Paulo, the most important industrial area of the country, involving 80,000 workers. The strikers, made desperate by hunger and the employers' harshness, were ready for the most resolute action. Understanding that the authorities might use the army against them, the strike organisers addressed an appeal to the soldiers that angrily accused the biggest employers of brutal exploitation of the workers. A new outbreak of the strike movement gripped Brazil at the end of 1918, when barricades were thrown up in Rio de Janeiro and other cities. A Workers' Republic was proclaimed on the proletarian outskirts of the capital. In reply, the government declared a state of emergency. Vigorous actions by the workers continued into the following years. The strike struggle reached its highest point in October 1919 when the workers of São Paulo, Santos, Campinas, and Sorocaba acted jointly. The strikes were brutally repressed, and more than 100 worker militants were expelled from the country.¹

While the upsurge of the labour movement in Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile led, under the influence of the revolutionary events, to a considerable part of the Socialists who were acquainted with Marxist theory adopting the stand of the Communist International, in Brazil the communist groups consisted primarily of revolutionary syndicalists, who responded ardently to the proletarian revolution in Russia. They were most active in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, where the Communist League of Liberation and the Labour Union operated, whose leaders were familiar with Marxism.² At first these organisations, and others like them in other areas, were mainly engaged in propagandist activity on a local scale; as they grew stronger, however, they displayed a tendency to unite. The coming together of revolutionary Marxists into a party was completed in March 1922. A. Pereira, Octávio Brandão, and other internationalists played a major role in the founding of the Communist Party of Brazil.

The party was forced to go underground immediately after its formation because the government, having suppressed an anti-government coup by troops in Rio de Janeiro in 1922, soon began to suppress progressive organisations. In those circumstances the party was forced to carry on a difficult struggle against anarchist and syndicalist moods in its ranks. The revolutionary labour unions from which the party emerged represented organisations of anarchist leanings ultraliberal in their structure, which ruled out any form

¹ Everardo Días, *Historia das lutas sociais no Brasil*, Edaglit São Paulo, 1962.

² B. I. Koval, *History of the Brazilian Proletariat, 1857-1967*. Moscow, 1968, p. 127 (in Russian).

of united centralised leadership. Therefore, although the principles of democratic centralism were in the party's Rules, they did not immediately become its organisational basis.

After the ending of the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1917, the working class of *Mexico* continued to fight for its rights, demanding strict observance of the provisions of the Constitution of 1917 and improvement of its economic position. The textile and oil workers held general strikes. The authorities acted severely against labour organisations: Casa dos Trabajadores del Mundo, the most authoritative organisation of the working class, was closed, and its leaders imprisoned or murdered.¹ The reformist leadership of the Mexican Regional Federation of Labour (Confederacion Regional Obrero Mexicana—CROM), closely linked with the American Federation of Labor, did great harm to the labour movement. They endeavoured to paralyse the worker masses' revolutionary initiative, subordinating their activity to the interests of the bourgeoisie.

A sharp struggle developed between the revolutionary and the reformist trends in the labour movement at the First National Socialist Congress, held in Mexico City from 25 August to 4 September 1919. At this congress, at which trade unions and parties of various political hues were represented, the revolutionary forces gave resolute battle to the opportunists.

In spite of the resistance of the leaders of the CROM the congress adopted a militant declaration of principles of revolutionary socialism which said that the socialist movement in Mexico would fight for complete abolition of the capitalist system by means of a social revolution.² This victory over the reformists helped consolidate the revolutionary mood of the active members of the labour movement. In September 1919 the separate Marxist groups united in the Communist Party of Mexico. The party took an active part in the founding, in 1921, of the General Confederation of Workers (CGT), which was intended to limit the influence of the CROM on the working class. Communists also joined in the general democratic movement for implementing the provisions of the 1917 Constitution, and supported the government of General Alvaro Obregon when clerical-feudal forces provoked a mutiny against it in 1923.

The mass movement in *Cuba* had a distinctly expressed anti-imperialist character; the working people demanded withdrawal of the US armed forces, the carrying out of an independent political policy, and measures to limit the operations of the American monopolies that bossed the economy. The general strike in March 1919 in Havana was particularly militant. In the early 20s the trade unions

¹ *Essays on the History of Mexico*, Moscow, 1960, p. 312 (in Russian).

² A. A. Sokolov, *The Labour Movement in Mexico*, Moscow, 1978, pp. 45-46 (in Russian).

at the National Labour Congress called for participation in the work of the Latin American Bureau of the Third International.¹

The Left Socialists of Cuba, whose main organisation was the Socialist Grouping (La Agrupación socialista de Habana) of Havana broke with the Second International at their conference in June 1922.² The leader of the association, Carlos Baliño, spoke in favour of joining the Communist International and moved a Declaration of principles that stressed the necessity of a united front of the Cuban proletariat and a persistent struggle with the widely applied theory and practices of class collaboration. A considerable number of Socialists supported the declaration. The most prominent revolutionary anarchists and anarchosyndicalists—Alfredo López and Antonio Penichet wrote in their articles in the labour newspapers *Via libre*, *Nueva Aurora*, and *Memorandum tipográfico*, that the October Revolution in Russia was the beginning of a world proletarian revolution that would emancipate all the workers of the world.³

The upsurge of the labour movement also affected other Latin American countries. In May 1919 there was a general strike in Peru for the first time in its history. The scale of the strike movement frightened the authorities, and it was brutally suppressed.⁴ Nevertheless the ruling circles had to make certain concessions under the pressure of the labour and democratic movement, which were written into the Constitution of 1920. The actions of the Peruvian proletariat helped radicalise the mood of the progressive youth, who were attracted by socialist ideas. In 1919 a young Marxist, José Carlos Mariategui, openly declaring his sympathy for the revolution in Russia, began to publish a newspaper *Razon*, which became the mouthpiece of the labour and socialist movement in Peru.⁵

An important milestone in the development in the labour movement in Ecuador was the organisation in 1922 of the Confederation of Labour Syndicates, which adhered to a socialist orientation. The proletariat's struggle reached its peak in 1922-1923 when a general strike broke out in Guayaquil. In the early 1920s the strike movement also affected Colombia, where the dockers of Cartagena, seamen, oil workers, and tobacco plantation workers were active. "At the end of 1922, stimulated by the consolidation of the Soviet

¹ *Essays on the History of Cuba*, Moscow, 1978, p. 183 (in Russian).

² *El movimiento obrero cubano. Documentos y artículos*, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, Vol. 1, Havana, 1975, pp. 367-68.

³ Angel Garcia and Piotr Mironchuk, *La revolucion de octubre y su influencia en Cuba*, Academia de ciencias de Cuba, Havana, 1977, p. 65.

⁴ Ricardo Martinez de la Torre, *El movimiento obrero en 1919*, Ediciones de "Amauta", Lima, 1928, p. 30.

⁵ Yu. P. Gavrikov, "José Carlos Mariategui—Fighter for the Ideas of Marxism-Leninism in Latin America, 1894-1930", *Novaya i noveishaya istoria*, 1978, No. 4, p. 80.

socialist revolution, and the heat of the new social struggles of our people, the revolutionary groups began to reorganise in the different regions."¹ In 1920 the first mass strike of workers and artisans took place in *Costa Rica*. Communist circles arose in *Guatemala*. And the labour movement was strengthened in other countries in Central America.

The rise in the fighting spirit and organisation of the labour movement in Latin America and throughout the world was also reflected in the forming of class organisations of the proletariat in the colonies of the European powers on the American Continent. In 1922 the first trade union, the Labour Union of British Guiana was formed in *British Guiana*, earlier than in many other British colonies. Marxist groups arose in *Martinique*.

The period directly after the October Revolution became an important turning point in the development of the working class and of the liberation movement in Latin America. There was a qualitative leap in the level of the proletariat's trade union and political organisation and social activity. The old social-reformist labour parties collapsed. Communist parties arose in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay. In the course of acute, tense struggles, the working class of Latin America entered the political arena for the first time as an independent force, combining the defence of its class interests with the fight for national, historical ends. Although the Communists by no means immediately found the right strategy and tactics of struggle for socialism, or managed to win a leading position in the anti-imperialist movement, an active front against imperialism was opened in Latin America.

The rise of a mass labour and democratic movement strongly influenced the domestic political development of Latin American countries. It was then that the ruling classes consolidated themselves around bourgeois-landowner governments, trying at any price to stem the wave of revolutionary actions of the masses. Even in Mexico, where representatives of the national bourgeoisie were in power, who owed their rise to the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the government did not stop at sending troops to suppress the actions of workers and peasants; reaction foully murdered the peasant leaders Emiliano Zapata and Francisco Villa. The dictator Gomez established a brutal reign of terror in Venezuela.

At the same time the labour and democratic movement forced the ruling classes of several countries to reconsider the whole arsenal of ways and means of tackling social problems. In Argentina the government of Hipolito Irigoyen tried to resort to reforms as well

¹ *Treinta años de lucha del Partido Comunista de Colombia*, Ediciones Paz y Socialismo, Bogotá, 1960, p. 12; José Arizala "Octubre y América Latina", *Documentos políticos*, Bogotá, No. 128, 1977, pp. 89-98.

as to direct suppression of the masses. The President of Chile, Alessandri, also carried out a reformist programme. The drafting of labour legislation began in Brazil. The Mexican bourgeoisie could not deprive the working class of the gains it had won during the revolution, and President Obregon who was defending the interests of the bourgeoisie, had to yield to the workers' pressure in some cases so as "not create problems for the government", as he put it.¹ In October 1922 one of the sections of the workers, the employees of the Montevideo telephone company, won a decree from the government for the first time in the history of the labour movement of Uruguay, establishing a minimum wage.² Even in countries with dictatorial regimes the demands of the dissatisfied proletariat had to be taken into account, and concessions made. In Peru, for instance, a law was passed in 1921 regulating the work of women and children, and in Bolivia a law on compensation for industrial injuries.³

The working class of Latin America gradually became a leading force of revolutionary struggle for democracy, independence, and socialism, at the cost of heroic efforts and great sacrifices.

ASIAN WORKERS AND THE FIGHT FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION

The road to the formation of the working class of Asian countries, and its composition and structure were conditioned by the peculiarities of the development of capitalism in them. "In the long run capitalism itself is educating and training the vast majority of the population of the globe for the struggle," Lenin wrote.⁴ The socio-economic backwardness of the colonies and semi-colonies oppressed by imperialism, the survival of feudal and sometimes tribal and clan relationships in them, and the people's almost complete illiteracy, lack of rights were a direct result of the colonial regime. Capitalism, while forcing its way in these countries (though with difficulty) was caught up in many patriarchal and feudal survivals that distorted its "normal" development and gave it a particularly brutal character. During World War I, when the colonies were cut off from the metropolitan countries, the conditions for the development of a national capitalism temporarily improved in the East. As Lenin noted: "As a result of the last imperialist war, a number

¹ Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, *Labor and the Ambivalent Revolutionaries. Mexico, 1911-1923*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1976, p. 77.

² Martínez López, *Las organizaciones de los trabajadores y el conflicto industrial*, Montevideo, 1966, p. 36.

³ S. V. Fajardo, *Sindicalismo libre en el Perú*, Lima, 1965, pp. 78, 97, see also *The Proletariat of Latin America*, Moscow, 1968, p. 164 (in Russian).

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Better Fewer, But Better", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 500.

of countries of the East, India, China, etc., have been completely jolted out of the rut. Their development has definitely shifted to general European capitalist lines".¹

Even in these relatively favourable conditions, however, the growth of national industry in the towns and a certain activation of the entrepreneurial activity of local capitalists were accompanied with mass pauperisation and ruin of the rural population, the accumulation of vast funds in the hands of merchant and money-lender strata, and an intensification of exploitation of the peasantry. National capitalism, which was highly dependent on the imperialism of the metropolitan countries, developed extremely unevenly. Its types and forms differed in town and country; and its specific features differed significantly from one region to another. Capitalism took shape, moreover, both "from above" (under the impact of imperialism) and "from below" (through natural development of the precapitalist structures that absolutely predominated in the economy).

The social structure of Asian countries had several features in common:

- (I) the relatively small numbers of the working class in the total population due to the weak development of capitalism and the existence of strong survivals of semi-feudal and feudal forms of economy;
- (II) the comparatively small proportion of the factory proletariat in the total of the working class, because of the low level of industrialisation, and the dominance almost everywhere of sections of the working class associated with petty-commodity, artisan and manufactory production;
- (III) a predominance of unskilled and semi-skilled labour and low percentage of skilled workers; the proletariat's close ties with the land and individual business; a high labour turnover;
- (IV) the high percentage of women and children in the composition of the working class, which made the position of its main contingents even less stable;
- (V) the spread in pay of the different strata of workers, with a general extremely low level of earnings and a hard life;
- (VI) the use of semi-feudal forms of exploitation alongside the latest capitalist ones;
- (VII) the existence of substantial national, religious, and tribal differences that complicated growth of the proletariat's organisation and class consciousness;

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 499.

(VIII) the existence of vast semi-proletarian ("pre-proletarian") petty-bourgeois strata of the population, surrounding the working class and affecting its position and outlook on life.

The specific features of the formation of a working class in Asian countries determined both the scale and forms of the labour movement itself and its relations with the local bourgeoisie and their separate strata, and its role in the national liberation struggle. Its role was considerable right from the start, but the proletariat could not take the lead in the anti-imperialist movement, because of the absence of a hard core of industrial workers, weak organisation, and the strong influence of petty-bourgeois elements. Another serious obstacle was the constant persecution of its best representatives by both the colonial authorities and the national bourgeois governments, which were terrified by the workers' growing movement and nursed a hatred of its leaders.

After the October Revolution moulding of the Asian proletariat's class consciousness was noticeably accelerated through the impact of both domestic and external factors, viz., the example of the first steps of the Russian workers' and peasants' government and the strengthening of the labour movement in the metropolitan countries. The labour movement of Asian countries not only learnt from the labour parties and trade unions of the more developed countries but also got help and support from them. The influence of the Asian working class on the national liberation struggle increased as the proletariat became more mature and was converted from a "class in itself" to a "class for itself".

The October Revolution really posed the issue of the need to combine Marxism-Leninism and the national liberation movement. More and more groups of this movement began to turn to Marxism in search of an explanation of the outlook for the colonial and dependent countries' social development, and to Communists as the most vigorous fighters for national and social emancipation and convinced internationalists. Ho Chi Minh described his road as follows: "At first it was my patriotism, not communism, that brought me to Lenin and the Communist International. Only gradually, by studying Marxist-Leninist theory, and through action and practical work, did I come to understand that only socialism and communism can rid the oppressed nations and working people all over the world of slavery. I saw how inseparably genuine patriotism and proletarian internationalism are bound up together."¹ Although the spread and assimilation of Marxism-Leninism came up against great obstacles, and the development of a proper relation between the general pat-

¹ Ho Chi Minh, *On Lenin and Leninism (Selected Speeches and Articles)*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1971, p. 116.

terns and the specific features of the revolutionary process in the separate countries was a particularly complicated business, the ideas and experience of the October Revolution had an ever-growing impact on the national liberation movement in Asia.

In *India* the number of factories had increased 5.5 times between the end of the nineteenth century and 1919, and the numbers employed in them 3.5 times. According to the 1921 Census out of a total population of 320 million (146,400,000 gainfully employed) 15,700,000 were employed in manufacturing industries (1.5 million in factories), 347,000 in mining, and 1,900,000 in transport. Around 30 million wage-labourers worked in agriculture, around a million of them on plantations alone; 10.7 per cent of the population was employed in industry (including petty, small-scale production).¹

Agricultural labourers constituted 26.2 per cent of the rural population.² The centre of the moulding of an Indian industrial proletariat remained Bombay, where between 400,000 and 450,000 workers were concentrated, half of whom worked in mills and factories.

The Indian worker's position was extremely hard; the working day lasted from 10 to 12 hours, pay was under half the official very meagre living wage. Workers and their families suffered from malnutrition, illness, and the absence of either medical care or labour protection. By official data the average life expectancy was 28 years. The army of unemployed (especially of unskilled workers fresh from the countryside) was much greater than the number of jobs.

After the October Revolution, whose development had a mounting impact on the mood of the progressive public of India,³ there began to be a stormy upsurge of the national liberation and labour movements. The first news of the Revolution in Russia had already stimulated the leaders of the Indian National Congress at their session in December 1917 in Calcutta to put forward more radical demands than before.⁴ The working class declared powerful strikes. The December 1918 and January 1919 strike won higher pay for 125,000 Bombay textile workers. In 1918 the workers in Ahmedabad went on strike, their action being directly led by Mahatma Gandhi, and also workers in Kanpur, Calcutta, and Madras.⁵ The shooting of unarmed people in Amritsar by British colonial troops in April 1919 (around a thousand were killed and twice as many wounded) aggravated the anti-imperialist struggle.

¹ A. I. Levkovsky, *Features of the Development of Capitalism in India before 1947*, Moscow, 1956, pp. 103-105 (in Russian).

² Surendra J. Patel, *Agricultural Labourers in Modern India and Pakistan*, Current Book House, Bombay, 1952, p. 14.

³ S. G. Sardesai, *India and the Russian Revolution*, Communist Party Publication, New Delhi, 1967, pp. 18-19.

⁴ *Lenin in Contemporary Indian Press*, New Delhi, 1970, p. 13.

⁵ *The Communist Movement in India*, Moscow, 1971, p. 18 (in Russian).

Although the immediate cause of most of the workers' actions was the unprecedentedly hard economic situation, the strikes also advanced political demands. Solidarity strikes were called, and protests made against lack of political rights, the arbitrariness of the colonial authorities, and police violence and persecution. "Workers have become conscious of their new strength and have demonstrated it for others to see", the Indian press wrote.¹ The unprecedented scale of the working class actions led Bal Gangadhar Tilak, an outstanding leader of the Indian liberation movement, to conclude that "the authority of workers' organisations is going to grow in the process of time and it is the workers who are going to become rulers."²

The national liberation movement, which included the broad masses of the working people of town and country, began to become more organised and purposeful. The activity of underground and semi-underground organisations linked with revolutionary Indian emigrés, which had already grown up before the war, also increased. The emigrés' chief centres were in Afghanistan, France, Germany, Sweden, and the USA. After the October Revolution their numbers grew rapidly in Central Asia, mainly in Tashkent, where an Indian Communist Party was founded at the end of 1920 (which soon, however, broke up).³

In India itself the national revolutionaries began to come out of hiding and to establish contacts with the masses. In March 1919 the leader of the national liberation movement, Mahatma Gandhi, issued a call for a campaign of civil disobedience (*hartal*) in protest against the government's declaration of a state of emergency. Strikes of workers and big anti-British demonstrations began throughout the country; and in some areas there were uprisings. At its Amritsar session the Indian National Congress enthusiastically supported the programme of non-violent struggle proposed by Gandhi, and in September 1920 a special session of the Congress in Calcutta officially adopted the drafted programme of *satyagraha*, i.e. of non-violent non-cooperation (closing of shops, and of schools and other institutions; the holding of meetings and demonstrations, etc.), which became one of the main trends of the Indian national liberation movement for decades.⁴

¹ S. G. Sardesai, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

² S. G. Sardesai, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

³ T. F. Devyatkina, M. N. Egorova, A. M. Melnikov, *The Birth of the Communist Movement in India. An Historical Sketch*, Moscow, 1978, pp. 72-80 (in Russian).

⁴ M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1969, pp. 346, 350, 354, 355, 378, 379.

Many eminent Indian public figures, writers, and thinkers began to speak openly of the need to base the liberation struggle on the working class and to learn from young Soviet Russia (Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Chitta Ranjan Das, Subraman Bharati, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai, and others).

The progressive press spread Lenin's ideas about the leading role of the working class in the liberation struggle and international solidarity of the proletariat. The main points of his articles and speeches, especially his appeals to the peoples of the East, were discussed in detail, and attempts to distort the policy of the young Soviet state were rebuffed. B. G. Tilak published his first article about Lenin as a most outstanding leader of the working people of the world only three months after the October Revolution. Biographical essays on Lenin were published in many languages.

An indication of the Indian people's attitude to Soviet Russia was the message sent to Lenin by Indian emigré revolutionaries in Kabul in February 1920, in which they expressed deep gratitude and admiration "for the great struggle that Soviet Russia is waging to liberate all oppressed classes and nations".¹ Lenin wrote in reply: "I am glad to hear that the principles of self-determination and the liberation of oppressed nations from exploitation by foreign and native capitalists, proclaimed by the Workers' and Peasants' Republic, have met with such a ready response among progressive Indians, who are waging a heroic fight for freedom. The working masses of Russia are following with unflagging attention the awakening of the Indian workers and peasants. The organisation and discipline of the working people and their perseverance and solidarity with the working people of the world are an earnest of ultimate success. We welcome the close alliance of Moslem and non-Moslem elements. We sincerely want to see this alliance extended to all the toilers of the East. Only when the Indian, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Persian, and Turkish workers and peasants join hands and march together in the common cause of liberation—only then will decisive victory over the exploiters be assured. Long live a free Asia!"²

In December 1920 the Indian National Congress called for active struggle against the colonial authorities through an act of civil disobedience, i.e. the non-payment of taxes, and expressed sympathy with the struggle of the workers under the leadership of the trade unions, which had held their first national congress in October 1920. Eight hundred delegates, representing 60 organisations, had founded

¹ *Pravda*, 20 May 1920.

² V. I. Lenin, "To the Indian Revolutionary Association", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 138.

the All-India Trade Union Congress. Its leader Lajpat Rai declared: "Imperialism and militarism ... are one in three and three in one. It is only lately that an antidote has been discovered and that antidote is organised labour. The workers of Europe and America have now discovered that the cause of the workers is one and the same all the world over, and that there can be no salvation for them, until and unless the workers of Asia were organised, and then internationally affiliated. The movement we are inaugurating today is thus of more than national importance.... The workers of India are joining hands and brains not only to solidify the interests of Indian labour, but also to forge a link in the chain of international brotherhood."¹

The strike movement reached its peak in 1921; more than 600,000 workers took part in 369 strikes. In November 1921 the first national political strike was held, in protest against the Prince of Wales' visit to India and demanding the granting of independence. The workers' mass actions took place under such slogans as "Workers of the World, Unite!", "Down with Imperialism!", "Long Live Workers' Rule!", "Long Live the Russian Revolution!", "Long Live Soviet Rule!"². The centre of the strike movement was Bombay, where 132,000 workers took part in 103 strikes in 1921, and 173,400 in 143 strikes in 1922. The Second Congress of the All-India Trade Union Congress, held at the end of 1921, passed a number of resolutions helping mobilise workers for struggle against the colonial authorities, it expressed profound solidarity with the working people of Soviet Russia, and called on the workers of the world to help them overcome famine.³

The authorities unleashed repression against the freedom fighters and strikers, but their terror did not break the Indian people's resolution to continue their struggle for independence.

The upsurge of the labour movement accelerated the forming of communist groups, which arose in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Lahore, Kanpur, Benares, and among emigré revolutionary circles. Representatives of these groups took an active part in the Third Congress of the Comintern, but their uniting into a single organisation, and the founding of a Communist Party of India, were prevented by the colonial authorities' fierce persecution. The party was founded only in 1925.⁴

In *China* there were 692 relatively big mills and factories before World War I; by 1920 their number had risen to 1,759. In the leading industry—textile—there had been nine cotton mills (eight

¹ S. G. Sardesai, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

² *Ibid.*, p. 37.

³ T. F. Devyatkina *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-38.

⁴ *The Communist Movement in India*, pp. 25, 34-36.

foreign-owned), while there were already 106 in 1922 (37 foreign-owned). Industry (foreign and domestic) was concentrated in several coastal towns (Shanghai, Tianjin, Qingdao, Guangzhou), and in Manchuria, where Japanese capital ruled the roost. The main industrial, commercial, and financial centre was Shanghai, where more than half of all the industrial workers were concentrated.

The stable mixed character of the Chinese economy determined the mixed composition of the working class. The bulk of the workers were linked with the simplest forms of capitalist production. In the towns there were eight to ten million handicraft workers, and around two million manufactory workers; the numbers employed in mills and factories were not more than 600,000 in the early 1920s. The work force in both foreign and Chinese-owned enterprises was exploited to exhaustion, and had to be rapidly and constantly replenished. Temporary, seasonal, and contract workers, mainly women (50 per cent) and children (10 per cent), predominated in the industrial proletariat.¹ Worker cadre numbered only a few tens of thousands, and they were mainly first generation.

A preponderance of feudal, patriarchal relations was characteristic of the development of China's economy. Contract and temporary workers were in bondage to foremen, lived in barracks under the supervision of overseers who strictly controlled the conditions of hiring and firing, the paying out of wages, and the workers' life and leisure. Getting a job depended on various kinds of guilds, regional and clan connections, legal and secret societies (in Shanghai the "Red" and "Blue" tongs), among which there was a constant struggle for jobs that often led to bloody fights and brawls.

Millions of semi-proletarians and lumpen-proletarians were also concentrated in the towns—coolies, rickshaw-pullers, navvies, day-labourers, chance employees, semi-unemployed, and unemployed; their total numbers were more than 30 million. The proportion of workers of all types was not more than 2.5 per cent of the total population in the 1920s (while the factory workers were only between 0.1 and 0.2 per cent). There was practically no agricultural proletariat in China.²

The growth in numbers of the factory and manufactory proletariat during and after World War I was not accompanied with any essential shifts in their organisation. In practice there were no independent proletarian organisations. In Guangdong, and Hong Kong the national liberation party Kuomintang, founded by Sun Yatsen in 1912, which rejected class struggle, was influential among some

¹ *The Working Class of China (1949-1974)*, Moscow, 1978, pp. 7-9 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 12. See also A. V. Meliksetov, "Certain Features of the Formation of the Working Class of China in Recent Times", in *Ninth Scientific Conference 'Society and the State in China'*, Part III, Moscow, 1978, p. 7 (in Russian).

of the workers. The activity of anarchists was more noticeable. Chinese workers did not have much experience of economic and political struggle. Strikes tended to be spontaneous and isolated. In foreign-owned enterprises there were Luddite-type actions with an anti-imperialist tinge, which were often organised and financed by Chinese capitalists with the help of students.

The October Revolution in Russia had a many-sided effect on the budding labour movement in China, which became a mass movement for the first time in the mid-20s, acquired political significance on a national scale and adopted modern forms of organisation. The bulk of the workers were drawn into revolutionary struggle through the national liberation movement. As a result their political consciousness (national, and later class) was awakened and they came out as a new social force claiming an equal position in society. The most advanced, albeit small, section of the proletariat began consciously to apply the experience of struggle of the workers of Soviet Russia, to form communist groups and trade unions, and to disseminate the ideas of Marxism-Leninism (sometimes in primitive form) among the workers.

The beginning of the postwar national liberation, anti-imperialist movement in China was linked with the "May 4 Movement", a mass action in 1919 against the colonial powers and the government begun by students and intellectuals in protest against the rejection of the Chinese representatives' demands at the Paris Peace Conference (abolition of the imperialist powers' special rights and privileges in China; return of Shandong, seized by the Japanese; and so on). In May and June a wave of anti-imperialist and anti-governmental actions, meetings, demonstrations, strikes, boycotts of Japanese goods, and petition campaigns swept the country. The movement gripped almost all the big cities and all strata of the urban population from the bourgeoisie to the working class. On June 5 the Shanghai capitalists declared a general strike of traders and fomented strikes of workers in foreign enterprises (Japanese textile mills, Anglo-American and French tramway companies, and the Anglo-American Tobacco Company), in which 60,000 to 70,000 workers took part. The strikers did not advance demands of their own, limiting themselves to support of the common patriotic slogans.

This was followed by traders' strikes in Nanking, Tianjin, Xiamen, Ningbo, Wuxi, and other towns, rickshaw-pullers and porters in Nanking, port workers in Jiujiang, miners in Tangshan, and railwaymen in Changxindian.

The patriotic May 4 Movement became a milestone in the liberation struggle, that marked the entry of two new forces onto the political arena—the students and the workers—and the beginning

of the people's direct actions in the form of political demonstrations and strikes. Propagandists of Marxism and organisers of the Communist Party of China came from the ranks of this movement (Li Dazhao, Chen Duxiu, Qu Qiubo, Deng Zhongxia, Zhang Tailei, Peng Bai, Yun Daini, and others). Professor Li Dazhao was the first Chinese revolutionary who resolutely turned to Marxism and called on the Chinese people to "follow the example of the Russians".¹

In 1920 communist groups and unions of socialist youth similar in composition and ideological and political orientation arose (with the help of representatives of the Comintern) among the students and lecturers in Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Wuhan, Changsha, and Jinan, and also in Tokyo. Communist circles grew up around the journal *Xin Qingnian* (The New Youth) edited by Prof. Cheng Duxiu. An underground journal *Gongchandang* (Communist) appeared. At the beginning of 1921 the Socialist Youth League also arose among the Chinese students studying in France, from which came many future leaders of the Communist Party of China (Zhou Enlai, Cai Hesen, Li Lisan, Chen Yi, Li Fuchun, Nie Rongzhen, Deng Xiaoping, and others). Members of the Communist circles began to work among the industrial proletariat. Together with anarchists they published several issues of weekly newspapers for the workers of Shanghai, Beijing, and Guangzhou, and leaflets and pamphlets demanding a raising of wages and reduction of the working day. Deng Zhongxia organised a workers' club (trade union) among the railwaymen in Changxindian and a workers' school at the station of Xiaoshadu that was run by Li Qihan.²

The founding Congress of the Communist Party of China (by that time numbering about 60 members) was held in Shanghai in July-August 1921. It declared the main immediate aim of the party to be: "to organise industrial unions" of workers and to imbue them "with the spirit of class struggle", and to take part in the democratic movements against militarism and bureaucracy, for freedom of speech, press, and assembly.

On a number of issues, however, the congress took a sectarian stand in the spirit of a "pure proletarian" movement, and rejected the possibility of co-operation with other parties. These trends were maintained in the years following.

In the 1920s the Communist Party of China consistently orient-

¹ For further details see: *The May 4, 1919 Movement in China. Documents and Papers*, Moscow, 1969; *The May 4 Movement of 1919 in China. Articles*, Moscow, 1971; V. P. Ilyushechkin, "The 'May 4' Anti-imperialist Movement of 1919 in China", *Problemy Dalnego Vostoka*, No. 2, 1979, pp. 147-57 (all in Russian).

² Deng Zhongxia, *A Short History of the Trade Union Movement in China*, Moscow, 1952, pp. 25-28 (in Russian).

ed itself on the working class as the new social force with which the country's future was linked. In July 1921 the party set up an All-China Labour Secretariat in Shanghai as a legal body to lead the labour movement (it was headed by Zhang Guotao and Li Qihan). During the first postwar strike wave that swept the country in 1922, the secretariat organised trade unions in several industrial enterprises in Hunan, Hubei, Shanghai, and on the railways of the North (usually in the form of workers' clubs), led a number of strikes, and developed a campaign for labour legislation.¹ The programme of labour legislation included demands for the right of workers to assembly and organisation, to strikes and collective bargaining, to an eight-hour day, a weekly rest day, paid holidays, factory inspection, etc.

The first big workers' strike, which grew into a general one, occurred at the end of 1921 and beginning of 1922, and was made by the seamen and dockers of Hong Kong, led by the Federation of Chinese Seamen, which was close to the Kuomintang. The strikers demanded a pay rise and recognition of trade union rights. The strike was supported by the Hong Kong corporation of coolies and porters and then by all the Chinese workers of that British colony. At the beginning of March the number of strikers reached 120,000. The authorities tried in vain to break the strike. The strike committee and thousands of strikers crossed over into Guangzhou where they got help from the South China Government then headed by Sun Yatsen, and from the Guangzhou unions of mechanics, railwaymen, and artisans. The strike took on a clear anti-imperialist hue. A campaign of solidarity developed on the railways of Central and North China, in Shanghai, and in Singapore and other foreign ports. The seamen of Shantou went on strike. Business proved to be completely disorganised in Hong Kong, and the employers suffered heavy losses. The colonial authorities had to make concessions, and agreed on March 5 to meet the strikers' demands. The strike's success raised the prestige of the trade unions in the eyes of the workers, and encouraged unity of the labour movement.

In May 1922 the First All-China Congress of Trade Unions was held, convened on the initiative of the All-China Labour Secretariat. It met in Guangzhou, where Sun Yatsen's government had repealed the anti-labour laws and police orders operating in other areas of the country. The congress was attended by delegates from 12 cities, representing more than 100 unions (and more than 200,000 organised workers) of various political orientations—from Kuomintang members, Communists, and anarchists to merchant middlemen and representatives of commercial-industrial associations. The con-

¹ Deng Zhongxia, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-98.

gress resolutions mapped out the lines for further development of the labour movement: the fight for an eight-hour day; help for strikers; and the industrial principle of trade union organisation. The All-China Labour Secretariat was given the job of acting as a central information body, which was a first step toward building a national organisation of trade unions.¹

The Second Congress of the Communist Party of China was held in July 1922; it adopted a broad programme of economic and political struggle of the working class and put forward the slogan of a national democratic front in the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution.² A combination of recognition of the weakness of the Chinese labour movement and exaggeration of its real possibilities was characteristic of its resolutions and the subsequent guidelines of the party.

In the summer of 1922 the militarist cliques passed to offensive methods, under pressure of the imperialist powers, to suppress the labour movement. In June Li Qihan was imprisoned in Shanghai, the All-China Labour Secretariat banned, and the unions created by it dissolved. In October British marines and the troops of the local warlords fired on a demonstration of miners of the Kailuan coal mines. The reprisals inflicted in February 1923 by the Zhili warlord, Wu Peifu, who until then had flirted with the workers, on those who took part in a political strike organised by Communists on the Peking-Hankow railway were particularly brutal. The railwaymen were demanding lifting of the ban on the holding of a congress of their union and the freeing of arrested activists. Dozens of workers were killed and many wounded during clashes with troops. After the breaking of this strike, there was a temporary decline in the labour movement.³

The strike wave of 1922 (around 300,000 workers took part in 100 strikes)⁴ distinctly displayed two features characteristic of the labour movement: (a) its dependence on the general course of the national liberation struggle; and (b) the internal weakness of its trade union organisations and the local, organisational and political disunity of the proletariat. The unions led by Communists were successful during strikes but afterward, as a rule, lost the positions gained. In fact they performed the role of strike committees but were not permanently operating labour organisations.

The lessons of the strike struggle very sharply posed the problem

¹ *Documents of All-China Trade Union Congresses*, [Peking, 1957, pp. 5-7 (in Chinese); Deng Zhongxia, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-95.

² V. I. Glunin, "The 50th Anniversary of the Second Congress of the Communist Party of China", *Problemy Dalnego Vostoka*, No. 3, 1972, pp. 118-28.

³ *Recent History of China, 1917-1970*, Moscow, 1972, p. 70 (in Russian).

⁴ Deng Zhongxia, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

of finding new ways of developing the labour movement, and of its place in the national struggle against imperialism, militarism and internal reaction. In 1923 Sun Yatsen's national revolutionary party, the Kuomintang, and the Communist Party of China accepted the advice of the Comintern to pool their forces in the maturing national revolution while maintaining the political and organisational independence of each party. The Kuomintang was then the sole influential national revolutionary party that had ramified links with the various social strata, including the workers, while the Communist Party had no mass back-up and only 230 members.¹ The political bloc of national revolutionaries and Communists was formed as a compromise by individual acceptance of members of the CPC and Socialist Youth League as members of the Kuomintang with simultaneous reorganisation of the latter. The overhaul of the Kuomintang was officially consolidated in the resolutions of its First Congress held in Guangzhou in January 1924 with the participation of Communists. Sun Yatsen's "three people's principles"—nationalism, people's power, and people's prosperity—were given a clearer anti-imperialist and general democratic character in a resolution drafted with the involvement of Communists. The congress, declaring its intention "to rely on the peasants and workers of the country", proclaimed its readiness to co-operate on that basis with all other participants in "the anti-imperialist and anti-militarist revolution".²

Sun Yatsen, an outstanding representative of revolutionary democracy, who again headed the Kuomintang government in Guangzhou, South China, highly appreciated the value of an alliance of the revolutionary liberation movement of China and the land of the October Revolution. He invited a group of Soviet military advisers, and made M. M. Borodin, a Bolshevik, his political counsellor. He dreamed of the day when China, finally liberated, would become the reliable friend and ally of the land of Soviets, the homeland of immortal Lenin, and march shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet Union in the great battle for liberation of the oppressed nations of the world.

In *Indonesia*, where the population was around 50 million, approximately 1.5 million were permanently employed workers and more than three million seasonal workers. Around 150,000 worked in 200 sugar mills, and more than 300,000 on the sugar-cane plantations. Around 126,000 workers were employed in 2,511 enterprises in manufacturing industry in 1916; the number had risen to 340,000 in 1920. The position of the workers, especially the seasonal and

¹ *The Comintern and the East*, 258-59.

² Sun Yatsen, *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1964, pp. 399-412 (in Russian).

unskilled workers, was extremely hard. The working day was not limited by law; wages supported only a beggarly, half-starving existence; and the will of employers and overseers reigned everywhere. The workers' position had greatly deteriorated during World War I.¹

The post-October upsurge of the labour movement was inseparable from the people's national liberation struggle against the Dutch colonial authorities. The first Marxist organisation in Southeast Asia—the Indian Social-Democratic Union, which had existed since 1914—and the national mass organisation Sarekat Islam (the Islamic League, founded in 1912), which was in fact the beginning of a united national front of progressive forces fighting imperialism, colonial oppression, and racial discrimination, played a leading role in this struggle. Members of the left wing of the Indian Social-Democratic Union worked successfully in labour organisations, laying the basis of their independence. Their active work in the branches of Sarekat Islam, in which the proletariat predominated, fostered a shift of the whole league to the left. In the middle of 1916 it had 360,000 members.² Membership soon rose to 800,000.³

There were quite a few trade unions in the country (railwaymen, tram employees, teachers, telegraphists, etc.), with 24,300 members. The trade union movement had developed under the leadership of Sarekat Islam and was experiencing great difficulties; its organisations were isolated and small, and clerical workers formed an absolute majority of their members; the unions also often consisted of workers of one nationality (Chinese, Dutch, etc.).

News of the October Revolution was greeted with great enthusiasm in Indonesia and gave an impetus to events that had already matured in Indonesian society. At the end of 1917, and in early 1918, mammoth meetings and demonstrations were held on Java, demanding effective steps by the authorities against the high cost of living, increases in wages, and satisfaction of urgent economic and political demands. There were also worker meetings in support of peasants who were acting against feudal exploitation. In 1918 an unusually broad strike movement developed in which railwaymen, printers, woodworkers, and other categories of workers took part. The workers' actions affected almost the whole country, and were particularly big and stubborn in Semarang, Malang, Batavia, Surabaya, and Bandung. Several strikes, in which around 7,000 workers took part in 1918, were won. There were also actions in the army and fleet at Surabaya and Semarang, where Soviets and a Red Guard,

¹ E. P. Zakaznikova, *The Working Class and the National Liberation Movement in Indonesia*, Moscow, 1971, p. 11 (in Russian).

² *Lenin and the National Liberation Movement in the Countries of the East*, Moscow, 1970, p. 427 (in Russian).

³ E. P. Zakaznikova, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

that was joined by around 3,000 men, were formed. The attempts to form Soviets, however, were soon suppressed by the authorities.¹

The fifth congress of the Indian Social-Democratic Union was held in May 1918 in a situation of upsurge of the labour movement. Not only delegates (from the Union's 740 members) attended, but also representatives of a whole number of branches of Sarekat Islam and trade unions. The congress adopted rules and a programme that opened the way to founding a mass workers' and peasants' party.²

The upswing of the labour movement continued in 1919 and 1920, when 66,000 and 83,000 workers respectively went on strike. In 1919 the striking workers were joined by peasants of Central Java and Sulawesi, who were fighting not only the colonial authorities but also local feudal lords. The strikes were led by the Sugar Workers' Union. Oil workers, print workers, and dockers also went on strike. At the end of 1919 a united national trade union centre was formed on the initiative of the Indian Social-Democratic Union, in close co-operation with Sarekat Islam, viz., the Working Class Association, which was joined by 22 organisations with 72,000 members.³ The rules adopted spoke of the need to abolish capitalist society, nationalise or socialise industrial enterprises, banks, and transport, introduce labour legislation, and prepare the working class to fulfil its historical mission.⁴

The upsurge of the labour movement furthered the proletariat's greater class consciousness and strengthened its position in the anti-imperialist struggle. In May 1920 the Indian Social-Democratic Union, which was displaying great activity and cohesion, was transformed into the Communist Party of Indonesia. Representatives of it took part in the Second Congress of the Comintern and the First Congress of the Peoples of the East. The founding of the Communist Party of Indonesia was very important for further activation of the labour and national liberation movement in the country. By exploiting legal opportunities the party was able to win an influential position among the masses, mainly among the proletariat. But it frightened the right-nationalist leaders of Sarekat Islam, who succeeded in splitting the Working Class Association in 1921, and developed an attack on Communists. In 1921-22 the Communists, who continued to fight for unity of the national anti-imperialist and labour movement, increased their ranks (to 1,300 in 1922). But the increasing influence of the Communist Party of

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-57, 72.

² *Lenin and the National Liberation Movement in the Countries of the East*, pp. 433-34.

³ *The First Congress of the Revolutionary Organisations of the Far East*, Petrograd, 1922, pp. 283-85 (in Russian).

⁴ *Lenin and the National Liberation Movement in the Countries of the East*, pp. 435-36.

Indonesia on the one hand, and the concessions of the colonial authorities to the national bourgeoisie on the other, induced the right-wing leaders of Sarekat Islam to expel Communists from the league in 1923. As a result of the split most of the branches of Sarekat Islam, however, followed the Communists, who founded a Red Sarekat Islam. In March 1923 it was renamed Sarekat Rakjat (The People's League), with participation of the CPI, trade unions, and other organisations, and became the mass basis and support of the CPI.¹

In May 1923 there was a major strike of railwaymen, which was led by Communists. The overwhelming majority of the workers on the railways took part in it (13,000 out of 20,000). They were supported by the workers of many industries, transport, and communications. The actions were particularly big and stubborn in Eastern Java, and in Surabaya and Semarang. The strike was broken by force and the authorities went on the offensive against democratic organisations. Strikes were banned, severe restrictions were imposed on meetings, gatherings, and demonstrations. Communists and militant trade unionists were harshly repressed.²

The most developed country in the Near East was *Turkey*, in which the number of wage-earners was between 400,000 and 450,000 at the beginning of the 20s. Of them, between 150,000 and 200,000 were employed in agriculture, 120,000 to 140,000 in artisan and manufactory industries, and 50,000 to 70,000 in factory production. In Istanbul, the biggest commercial and industrial centre, there were more than 100,000 workers, of whom 10,000 were skilled. In Anatolia there were 40,000 industrial workers.³

In 1920-23 there were several trade union associations, viz., the Turkish Workers' Union, the International Labour Union, the Anatolian Railwaymen's Union, the International Union of Seamen, and miners', building workers', and woodworkers' unions.⁴ On the initiative of the Turkish Workers' Union a conference of various organisations was held in Istanbul in July 1922, but it did not achieve unity, and it was decided to continue preparatory work.⁵

The young, small working class took a direct part in the national liberation, bourgeois-democratic movement that swept Turkey after defeat in World War I and occupation of many areas of the

¹ A. A. Guber, *Indonesia. Socio-Economic Essays*, Moscow, 1933, p. 314 (in Russian).

² A. A. Guber, *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1976, pp. 79-81 (in Russian).

³ For further details see: Yu. N. Rozaliev, *Essays on the Industrial Proletariat of Turkey after World War II*, Moscow, 1956, pp. 13-14; R. P. Kornienko, *The Labour Movement in Turkey. 1918-1963*, Moscow, 1965, p. 9 (both in Russian).

⁴ *The Profintern handbook. The World Trade Union Movement*, Vol. 3, Moscow-Leningrad, 1926, p. 341 (in Russian).

⁵ M. Tunçay, *Türkiye'de sol akımlar (1908-1925)*, Ankara, 1978, p. 313.

country by troops of the Entente powers. The Turkish people's national liberation movement began and developed under the powerful impact of Soviet Russia, which had successfully repelled the onslaught of whiteguards and foreign interventionists. The attempts of the Sultanate, which was in Istanbul (occupied by the Entente), to carry out the imperialists' demands simply led to the movement (as M. V. Frunze, who visited Turkey at the end of 1921 and early in 1922, wrote) "beginning to develop in spite of it and against it, so taking on a definite revolutionary character".¹ Because of the smallness and weak organisation of the working class the revolution was led by the national bourgeoisie and landowners, grouped around nationally-minded officers and members of the intelligentsia. Mustafa Kemal became their leader. Subsequently he was given the sobriquet Ataturk ("Father of the Turks"). The movement itself came to be called the "Kemalist Revolution".

In April 1920 the Grand National Assembly of Turkey was convened in Ankara, which set up a government headed by Mustafa Kemal. It requested Lenin to establish diplomatic relations with Turkey and support the Turkish nation in its fight for independence. The Soviet government gave Turkey every kind of selfless aid. In 1921 a treaty of friendship and brotherhood was signed, which was later supplemented in 1921 and 1922 by friendship agreements with the Transcaucasian Soviet Republics and the Soviet Ukraine.²

The powerful upsurge of the anti-imperialist liberation movement, the help of the peoples of Soviet Russia, and support by the Muslim peoples of the East, consolidated the position of the republican government of Turkey, whose troops inflicted a series of defeats on the interventionists and drove them out of the country. On 29 October 1923 Turkey was proclaimed a republic. The country was transformed from a feudal, theocratic monarchy into a bourgeois republic; the Sultanate and Caliphate were abolished.

In the complicated situation of occupation, the working class had waged a courageous struggle for freedom of its homeland. The workers of Istanbul had been particularly active, had gone on strike, and rendered aid to the Anatolian liberation army. In the autumn of 1918 the first Communist groups arose. The underground Communist circles of Istanbul propagandised Marxism, spread the truth about the October Revolution and the Soviet Russia, and explained the role of the working class.³ While fighting the class enemies and

¹ M. V. Frunze, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, Moscow-Leningrad, 1929, p. 257 (in Russian).

² For further details see: A. M. Shamsutdinov, *The National Liberation Struggle in Turkey (1918-1923)*, Moscow, 1966 (in Russian).

³ *TKP doğuşu, kuruluşu, gelişme yolları Türkiye komünist partisi tarihinden sayfalar* (s.l., s.a.), p. 3.

occupation forces, collaborators, and yellow legal organisations, the Communists set up their groups in factories, and issued leaflets and pamphlets;¹ in 1920 groups were also operating in Ankara, Zol-guldak, Rize, Samsun, Sivas, Trabzon, Eskişehir, Erzurum, and other towns of Anatolia. Workers in the war factories, miners, seamen, railwaymen, and textile workers were their most active members. The Communists published newspapers *Eni Dünya* (New World), and *Emek* (Labour). In September 1921, the Kemalist government, endeavouring to win the workers' support for the liberation struggle, introduced a law on the rights of the miners of the Eregli coal basin which for the first time established an eight-hour day for miners, recognised their trade union, and proclaimed certain rights for workers.

The labour movement's main achievement during the national liberation revolution was the founding of the Communist Party of Turkey (CPT). Its backbone was the communist groups of Istanbul and Anatolia, and Communists who had been ex-POWs in Soviet Russia and were united in the Central Bureau of Turkish Communist Organisations under the chairmanship of Mustafa Subhi. Because of the impossibility of meeting legally in Turkey, the founding congress of the CPT was held in September 1920 in Baku. It discussed important issues of the anti-imperialist national liberation movement, declared the party founded, adopted its programme, and planned definite measures to strengthen the labour movement in Turkey. In January 1921, however, the leadership (headed by Mustafa Subhi) was arrested in Trabzon on its return home, taken out to sea, and killed. The party's activity was very soon rigorously banned. Hundreds of the best representatives of the working class were killed during the bourgeois government's mass terror against Communists.²

The forming of a working class in *Iran*, a backward, agrarian, semi-colonial, and semi-feudal country, developed in a peculiar way. Up to 300,000 seasonal workers migrated annually from the northern areas to work in Russia, where they were employed in the industries of the Central and Lower Volga as well as in industrial enterprises in Transcaucasia and Central Asia. The Iranian proletariat itself remained small in numbers, hardly totalling more than 100,000, most of whom were employed in artisan and manufactory industries and agriculture; around 20,000 worked on the British oilfields in the south.

The national liberation and labour movements both developed

¹ *Byulleten IV kongressa Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala*, No. 17, 1922, p. 28.

² A. M. Shamsutdinov, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-71; see also *Life Devoted to Struggle*, Moscow, 1966, pp. 491-509 (in Russian).

in Iran under the direct impact of the revolutionary events in Russia and in close connection with them. After the February Revolution the Soviets of Soldiers' Deputies that arose among the Russian troops stationed in Iran had representatives of the Iranian workers among their members, who took part in meetings and demonstrations along with the soldiers. Propaganda was carried on among the local populace; in Teheran there were strikes of the print workers, artisans, and petty traders.¹ In May 1917 Iranian workers and intellectuals founded Adalat (Justice), the first party of the working people, which received great help from the Bolsheviks of Transcaucasia, in particular from Meshadi Azizbekov and Nariman Narimanov. At the end of 1919 Adalat had underground organisations in Teheran, Tabriz, Rasht, Mashhad, Zanjan, Qazvin, Khalkhala, Marand, and Ardabil.²

Trade unions began to arise at the same time. In 1918 a Union of Printing Workers was formed in Teheran, which had 2,000 members. The print workers were able to carry out a successful strike that encouraged growth of the trade union movement. In the summer a strike broke out among the workers of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co., which was brutally broken. In December 1920 there was a three-day strike of the oil-workers of Abadan. In November 1921 the Central Council of Trade Unions of Iran was founded, which united the separate organisations and had 20,000 members in 1922.³

A Communist Party of Iran was formed at the first congress of Adalat, held in Enzeli on 22-24 June 1920, and had between 8,000 and 10,000 members. It was the first Communist Party to be formed in an eastern country. It joined the Comintern, and its leader Haydar-khan Amu Mohammed oglu played a leading role in the revolutionary movement. The party's programme adopted by the congress oriented the working people on struggle for liberation from imperialist oppression, annulment of the Anglo-Iranian agreement of 1919, overthrow of the Shah's regime, abolition of big feudal landholdings, and the building of a common, national front.⁴

The Communist Party took a very active part in the broadly developing national liberation and revolutionary movement, which was centred on Iranian Azerbaijan, the province of Gilan, and Khorasan. An uprising in Iranian Azerbaijan, led by Sheikh Mohammed

¹ A. Bashkirov, *The Labour and Trade Union Movement in Iran*, Moscow, 1948, pp. 18-19; Z.Z. Abdullaev, *The Formation of the Working Class of Iran*, Baku, 1968, pp. 20-21; I. A. Shamide, *The Labour and Trade Union Movement in Iran in 1906-1953*, Baku, 1967 (all in Russian).

² T. A. Ibraghimov (Shakhin), *The Formation of the Communist Party of Iran*, Baku, 1963, p. 196 (in Azerbaijani).

³ Sh. M. Badi, *The Working Class of Iran*, Moscow, 1965, p. 91 (in Russian).

⁴ *The Communist International*, No. 14, 1920, pp. 2889-91; see also *Lenin and the National Liberation Movement in the Countries of the East*, pp. 341-43.

Khiabani, resulted in the setting up of a democratic republic Azadistan (Land of Freedom) in June 1920; it was liquidated, however, in September by the Shah's troops with the help of the British.¹

After the withdrawal of the British interventionist forces from Transcaucasia in 1920 a popular uprising in Gilan proclaimed a Gilan Republic, which was headed by a petty-bourgeois revolutionary Kuchik Khan. The Communists joined the united national front, but the bloc of representatives of various strata and classes proved unstable. In spite of that a Soviet Republic was proclaimed in Gilan in August 1921. Kuchik Khan, who had established contact with the central government and British agents, fearing the Communists' growing influence among the workers and artisans, organised the murder of Communists in Rasht and Enzeli, including their leader Haydar-khan Amu Mohammed oglu. These reprisals against them greatly weakened the revolution. Kuchik Khan, incidentally, was himself killed during the suppression of the weakened revolutionary movement by the Shah's forces.²

The democratic movement that developed in Khorasan in 1921 under the leadership of Tagi Khan, which demanded expulsion of the British, establishment of Iran's independence, convening of the Majlis, and granting of freedom of speech, assembly, press, etc., to the people, could not achieve unity of its own ranks, and was suppressed by the Shah's troops.³ The disagreements within the democratic movement helped reaction to stifle the masses' revolutionary actions with the help of British imperialism, restore the government's authority, and then to complete a counter-revolutionary coup under the leadership of a British agent Seid Zia al-Din and Reza Khan, who was proclaimed Shah of Iran under the title Reza Shah Pahlavi.

In spite of the democratic movement's defeat, the people's struggle yielded fruit. Even the new pro-British dynasty could not restore British domination of the country. Iran was emancipated from British occupation, the shackling Anglo-Iranian Agreement was annulled, and the people got new experience of fighting imperialism.

The post-October upsurge of the liberation and labour movements in Asian countries speeded up formation of the proletariat and its transformation into a revolutionary force. The development of capitalist relations in Eastern countries and the great historical reforms begun by the October Revolution played a vital role in this, but despite the working class's active part in the national liberation, bourgeois-democratic movement that developed in those

¹ M. N. Ivanova, *The National Liberation Movement in Iran in 1918-1922*, Moscow, 1961, pp. 75-83 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86, 121-27.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

years, injecting it with its revolutionism, it could not take the lead of the mass struggle for national liberation, let alone for social emancipation. The general socio-economic backwardness of these countries due to the colonial powers' long domination, and their motley class structure, the smallness and weak organisation of the proletariat, and the constant persecution of progressive organisations by the colonial authorities and reactionary governments had their effect.

Nevertheless the foundations were laid then for uniting the struggle of the working people of Soviet Russia, the workers of the developed capitalist countries, and the national liberation movements of the peoples of the East; communist and workers' parties and trade unions were formed in Asian countries; and experience of both legal and illegal work was accumulated; party cadres began to be formed, who subsequently came to the top in the communist movement.

THE WORKING PEOPLE OF AFRICA AGAINST COLONIALISM

Africa was the first object of the capitalist powers' colonial expansion, and it had proved to be the last region where they "conquered" territories previously not occupied, or redivided as a result of World War I. The colonial activity of each of the imperialist powers left its mark on the social and political affairs of their arbitrarily carved-up possessions. The diversity of tribal and feudal relations, unevenness of involvement in the world capitalist economy, and various forms and methods of exploitation gave this vast continent an extremely motley pattern of socio-economic and political development. In the north, in Egypt and the Maghrib countries, capitalism was already displaying itself distinctly at the beginning of the century. In South Africa, where it was "transplanted" ready-made from developed countries, it had become the leading mode of production. But Tropical Africa still remained in the grip of patriarchal, tribal, feudal relations, the west being more developed than the central and eastern regions.

These differences in level of development of the different areas also had their effect on the social structure of the population, and affected the rates and forms of the forming of a working class. World War I speeded up the development of commodity-money relations and the break-down of pre-capitalist modes of production even in remote areas of the continent, to which imperialist monopolies had begun to penetrate in search of minerals, manpower, and food supplies needed for the war. The forcible inclusion of a considerable part of the male population in the armies of the belligerent powers,

and the production of important types of primary products for the war industry, commodities for the army and population extended the sphere of operation of capitalism. The shifts that occurred created the preconditions for an upsurge of the liberation movement, in which the role of the working class was more pronounced than earlier. In Africa, too, conditions built up promoting perception of the liberating ideas of the October Revolution in Russia. Their influence was particularly marked in the Union of South Africa, Egypt, and Algeria, where a young proletariat had already developed and begun to struggle for its rights.

The bulk of the predominantly unskilled workers were employed in agriculture and mining, in transport, and in artisan and hand manufacture. In Egypt and Algeria a national proletariat was formed, as had happened in Asian countries, especially in the Near East. In the Union of South Africa and the colonies of Tropical Africa the proletariat took shape differently. In them a system of forced labour and contracting of temporary workers was widespread. The colonial powers employed various methods of forced recruitment of labour: expropriation of enormous areas belonging to local tribes and peoples; back-breaking taxes; and labour service. They used the army, police, and authority of tribal leaders, and a system of intermediary contracting agents, who "recruited" labour by bribery, trickery, and deceit from local tribal leaders and transferred it to the colonialists.¹ The workers' position was little different from that of slaves. The contract and the migrant workers who retained close links with their villages, where tribal clan relations and communal use of land continued to predominate, were typical representatives of the proletariat of the Union of South Africa, Kenya, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Tanganyika, and the Belgian Congo.² Without any preliminary training these workers were drawn into the capitalist system saddled on them by the colonial authorities, and subjected to the most ruthless exploitation.

Nevertheless, the socio-economic shifts taking place in such monstrous form fostered an awakening of national self-awareness among the workers. The idea of a Black movement of protest proclaimed by Booker Washington, Marcus Garvey, and William Du Bois, found an ever broader response. National political organisations appeared, and in March 1920 a conference of representatives of organisations in the British West African colonies (Gold Coast, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia) met in Accra, at which the National Congress of West Africa was founded with Caseley Hayford as president. The resolution adopted by the conference said that it condemned

¹ M. I. Braginsky, *The Moulding of the African Proletariat*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 50-53 (in Russian).

² E. Sik, *Histoire de l'Afrique noire*, Vol. 2, Budapest, 1964, pp. 119-20.

the state of affairs when an African, no matter how educated or capable he might be, had less job opportunities and was paid lower wages as compared with Europeans.¹

Similar associations arose in many of the countries of Tropical Africa. Representatives of the local intellectuals in Uganda founded a Young Buganda Association which demanded democratisation of the local authorities. In Kenya the East African Association arose, which worked for the granting of political rights to the native population, reduction of taxes, abolition of the system of compulsory labour, and a rise in the pay of African workers.² In Nyasaland native associations were formed, which carried on cultural and educational activities, demanded political rights for Africans, equality of Africans and Europeans, and broadening of the representation of the indigenous population in local authorities. In Senegal, Dahomey, the Belgian Congo, and other colonies not only were national patriotic organisations founded, but the first strikes of railwaymen, office clerks, and workers in various enterprises occurred. Many World War I soldiers from French West Africa actively co-operated with the French Communist Party, with whose help an Intercolonial Union was founded in Paris, which published its own newspaper *Paria*.³ The Africans also took part in a Pan-African movement, the blacks of America and the West Indies playing the leading role in it.

Public organisations of a number of African countries were represented at Pan-African congresses of 1919-1923 which passed resolutions demanding elementary rights for the population and reforms in the government of the colonies. The activity of national and international organisations protesting against colonial and national oppression, and participation in strikes stimulated the growth of self-consciousness of the emergent proletariat.

On the whole, however, the rise and development of an African labour movement, and the organisation of trade unions in the early 20s took place in the context of the national liberation struggle, which included representatives of all classes and strata of the population. Its most active members were national bourgeois elements, and its driving force the urban middle strata, but the first awakening of national and political consciousness was greatly accelerated with involvement of the proletariat in the liberation struggle. At the same time the ideas of tribal separatism (tribalism) and dawning bourgeois nationalism had a restraining and deforming influence on the development of the labour movement and the maturing of a class,

¹ *History of the National Liberation Struggle of the Peoples of Africa in Recent Times*, Moscow, 1978, pp. 210-11 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 350, 355.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

proletarian outlook. In several countries the colonial authorities implanted the ideology of craft unionism, drawing the labour movement into the stream of bourgeois reformism.

In the *Union of South Africa*, on top of the mining industry (diamonds, gold, coal, copper, tin, platinum, silver, and lead), there were 7,000 mills and factories in 1922-23, including 68 metalworking and engineering firms, 1,877 food firms, and 729 textile mills, owned for the most part by foreign monopoly capital.¹

In this British dominion (where the 6,900,000 population included 1,500,000 European settlers and 150,000 Indians), the total size of the industrial proletariat and mining workers in 1923 was around 500,000. According to some figures at least a quarter of the agricultural population (around 800,000) laboured as hired (or contracted) workers on farms belonging to whites. In the mining industry less than a third of the nearly 300,000 workers were whites, but in the engineering industries, shipbuilding, jewellery, and printing they constituted the majority. The European skilled workers were mostly British.

A regime of racial segregation, political oppression of the majority of the population in the interests of the privileged white minority, was strictly observed in the country. Its socio-economic foundation was monstrous discrimination against African workers and "coloured" immigrants from Asia. Although the number of non-white workers had grown, Africans remained the most exploited and rightless part of the working class; they were paid only a sixth to a fifth of the pay of whites. The labour legislation, copied from the British, applied only to whites; the labour of African workers and "coloureds" was not regulated by law. The African miners were kept in special compounds, from which they were forbidden to go anywhere. In cases of refusal to do the exhausting work they were treated as criminally punishable "rebels". The race policy of oppression and exploitation created special difficulties for the labour movement and brought the problem of international co-operation to the fore in the proletariat's class struggle.

In 1917 two parties operated in the labour movement of the Union of South Africa: the South African Labour Party and the International League of the South African Labour Party (the International Socialist League of South Africa—ISL) which took a militant revolutionary stand and carried on much organisational work and propaganda. On its initiative the first organisation of African workers, the Industrial Workers of Africa, was founded in August 1917, which began a struggle to end discrimination against the Black population. The

¹ *The Profintern Handbook. The World Trade Union Movement*, Vol. 7, Moscow-Leningrad, 1927, pp. 251-54 (in Russian).

League published a weekly paper *The International*, which made propaganda for the principles of workers' international solidarity, anti-militarism and rallying of all anti-imperialist forces, the centre of its work. Its editor from 1917 to 1920 was David Ivon Jones.¹ The paper wrote with great enthusiasm about the October Revolution in Russia, called to follow the example of the Russian workers, and revive the International of the working class, and actively fight for the exploited and those without political rights. Socialist organisations grew up in several towns, whose activity spread the influence of the internationalists among the white and non-white population.²

The Fourth Congress of the International Socialist League, held in January 1919 in Johannesburg adopted a Declaration of the Principles of the ISL, rules, and appeal to the socialist parties of the world, and a resolution in which it warmly greeted and highly appreciated the activity of the Bolshevik government in Russia and the Spartacus League in Germany. The Declaration said that all workers should strive for a common aim, the working class of South Africa could not attain liberation unless it overcomes in its own midst prejudices and animosity to peoples with a different colour of skin. The road to revolution in the Union of South Africa had already been cleared by the socialist revolution in Russia. The ISL considered its paramount task to be educational work, agitation, and organisation of white and black workers.³

In March 1919 striking tramwaymen in Johannesburg set up a workers' council which took over the city transport, electricity and water supply under its own control. A lecture about Soviet Russia was held at a mammoth meeting, at which "The Internationale" was sung. Only after government interference and meeting of the strikers' demands did the workers return power to the City Council.⁴ In 1920 there was a strike of 70,000 African miners on the Witwatersrand, which was supported by the International Socialist League. The ISL called on "the white miner not to scab upon his black fellow worker". Leaflets in Zulu, Sutu, and other languages were distributed among the black workers.

¹ "Revolutionary Movement in South Africa", *The Communist International*, No. 16/17, 1920, pp. 102-07.

² Lebadi, *The Great October and the Liberation Movement in South Africa*, Gospolitizdat, Moscow, 1967; *The Working Class in Africa*, Moscow, 1966, p. 139 (both in Russian); A. Lerumo, *Fifty Fighting Years. The Communist Party of South Africa. 1921-1971*, Inkululeko Publications, London, 1971, pp. 35-36; A. B. Davidson, *South Africa—Moulding of the Forces of Protest (1870-1924)*, Moscow, 1972 (in Russian).

³ A. B. Davidson, "The Comintern and the Birth of the First Communist Party in Africa", in R. A. Ulyanovsky et al. (Eds.), *The Comintern and the East. Struggle for Leninist Strategy and Tactics on National Liberation Movement*, Nauka Department of Oriental Literature, Moscow, 1969, pp. 482-83 (in Russian).

⁴ A. B. Davidson, *art cit.*, pp. 484-87.

The Fifth Congress of the ISL in January 1920 unanimously decided to affiliate to the Communist International. Its representative at the Third Congress of the Comintern and the First Congress of the Profintern was Ivon Jones, who took part with a consultative vote. Later he became the representative of South Africa on the ECCI.¹

In July and August 1921 the founding congress of the Communist Party of the Union of South Africa was held in Capetown, amalgamating several South African proletarian organisations, with around 500 members. It developed a campaign to eliminate racial barriers between workers, to rally the proletariat on a class basis and prepare it for revolutionary activity. The party called for the creation of a democratic republic, the granting of political rights to all citizens, including the black population, and the repeal of anti-democratic and racist laws. It also put forward concrete demands: reduction of the working day; the fixing of a minimum wage; the granting of equal rights to strike to all workers irrespective of race and colour; and social security.²

The ISL, and later the Communist Party of the Union of South Africa, paid great attention to the organisation of trade unions, which increased in numbers from 77,800 in 1918 to 135,000 in 1920. Whites constituted the absolute majority of union members; black workers were less than 5 per cent of the total membership, and were organised only in Cape Province and Kimberley. Along with growth in working-class organisation there was an increase in the strike movement, as is shown by the incomplete official figures, which mention only strikes (and lockouts) of white workers: in 1918 there were 23 strikes involving 2,600 workers; in 1919 45 strikes and 23,300 strikers; in 1920 60 strikes involved 105,600 workers. In 1921, though the number of strikes fell to 25, they involved more workers; up to 100,000 African miners took part in one strike.³

The strike movement became particularly sharp in 1922. The workers of 40 gold mines, coal miners, railwaymen, and engineering workers in the Transvaal declared a general strike in March, which later developed into an insurrection. Its main cause was the policy of lowering the workers' standard of living, which was being implemented by methods typical of the imperialists and the capitalists of the Union of South Africa. The employers began replacing skilled white workers by low-paid blacks, which sharpened racial disagreements. The "white" trade unions demanded a stop to sackings and replacement of workers. The Communists' efforts to unite white and black workers (the conflict involved nearly 200,000 African workers)

¹ A. Lerumo, *op. cit.*, p. 36-37.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 117-20; see also *The Working Class of Africa*, pp. 117-20.

³ A. B. Davidson, *art. cit.*, pp. 472-74.

for joint struggle against their common exploiters—the imperialists and local capitalists—were not crowned with success. Separate actions weakened the forces of the insurrectionists. The authorities mobilised more than 20,000 soldiers to break the strike, which they officially labelled “the Red Revolt in the Transvaal”. During the clashes between strikers and soldiers, who used armoured cars and aircraft, 153 people were killed and 687 wounded (the troops and police lost 72 men killed and 291 wounded). Four workers were executed after suppression of the strike, and many were prosecuted.¹

In 1923 the total number of strikers fell to 24,000. But at that time strikes more and more often began to have a political character: workers demanded political rights, took action in defence of prosecuted comrades, and declared solidarity strikes. The government was forced to draft special legislation on strikes, based on an anti-democratic system of compulsory decision of “labour conflicts” through multistage arbitration.

The labour movement in *Egypt* developed in close connection with the national liberation movement, which was developing under the leadership of the bourgeois-nationalist Wafd Party.

Egypt was then a backward agrarian country with a lop-sided economy oriented on cotton. Cotton was grown predominantly on parcellar farms, which constituted 28.9 per cent of the cultivated area, while 40 per cent of the land was owned by big landowners. Tens of thousands of peasants, lacking both land and means of subsistence, laboured constantly as agricultural workers.²

Industry was weakly developed, artisan production and manufactory predominated. The 1924 population of 13,900,000 included approximately 550,000 workers, employed in manufacturing industry, transport and building, and concentrated in Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, and Suez. The workers included many women and children, especially in hand textile production, carpet weaving, and the sewing trades. There was no labour legislation, labour protection, or insurance. The working day depended on the whim of the hirers or employers.

In spite of its very hard conditions and life, the working class rose in anti-imperialist struggle, took part in anti-British strikes and demonstrations, and armed clashes with the colonial authorities. The anti-colonial, bourgeois, democratic revolution (the first such in the Arab world) that began on 9 March 1919 had a big effect on the postwar rise of the labour movement. Cairo workers took a very active part in it, holding a number of big strikes and demonstrations. The spontaneous meetings were accompanied with attacks

¹ A. Lerumo, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51; see also *The Working Class of Africa*, p. 140.

² *The Profintern Handbook. The World Trade Union Movement*, Vol. 7, p. 217.

on British troops. There were also revolutionary actions in Alexandria, Port Said, Asyut, and Damietta hard on the heels of the capital. From then on strikes hardly ceased. From August 1919 to December 1921 alone there were 81 strikes in Egypt involving 30,000 workers (tramwaymen, Suez Canal workers, the Cairo gasworkers, the tobacco workers, and textile workers); 95 local trade union organisations came into being.¹ In addition to economic demands there were calls for the end of British colonialism, and recognition of trade unions and national political organisations.

Britain's attempt at the end of 1921 to force a crippling treaty on Egypt, and persecution of the Wafd leaders, led to a new wave of protest demonstrations and clashes with troops. A general strike began in Cairo. Although the British troops, using tanks and aircraft succeeded in suppressing the main centres of the movement, in February 1922 Britain was forced to abolish the protectorate and recognise Egypt's independence. Sultan Fuad I was proclaimed king. His government promised to carry out democratic reforms.²

In 1921 socialist organisations in Cairo, Alexandria, and Port Said, which had already arisen in 1918 under the impact of the October Revolution, united in the Socialist Party of Egypt, which had 1,500 members in 1922. In spite of ideological differences, the party did much work in the trade unions. In March 1921 a General Confederation of Labour, headed by Antoine Maron, was founded at a conference of representatives of 20 trade unions uniting 50,000 organised workers.

In January 1923, at the second congress of the Socialist Party, the delegates decided to transform it into the Communist Party of Egypt and affiliate to the Comintern. The Programme of the CPE oriented the workers on fighting for the country's independence, ending of the imperialists' interference, nationalisation of the Suez Canal, recognition of trade unions and workers' political rights, and improvement of the economic position of the proletariat and peasantry.³

King Fuad's government, frightened by the growth of the labour movement and the influence of the Communist Party, began a persecution of Communists after the strike of woodworkers, which was broken by use of the regular army. A clause was introduced into the criminal code banning strikes of many categories of workers

¹ *History of the National Liberation Struggle of the Peoples of Africa in Recent Times*, pp. 114-21.

² *Recent History of the Arab Countries (1917-1966)*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 364-65 (in Russian).

³ *History of the National Liberation Struggle of the Peoples of Africa in Recent Times*, p. 122; see also L. A. Fridman, *The Capitalist Development of Egypt (1882-1939)*, Moscow, 1963, pp. 352-353 (in Russian).

and employees. The Communist Party was forced to go underground. The leader of the revolutionary trade union movement, Antoine Maron died later in prison.

The forming of a working class in *Algeria* was noticeably accelerated during World War I. In the 20s there were around 25,000 miners, 25,000 transport workers, 10,000 engineering workers, 10,000 dockers, 15,000 woodworkers, 11,600 print workers, 5,000 tobacco workers, etc. Considerable numbers of wage workers were employed in the textile, footwear, carpet, and other industries, where artisan and manufactory production predominated, and also in agriculture. With the end of the war emigration increased. More and more people went to France to work; while 5,600 had left in 1919, their numbers were already 69,500 in 1924.¹

Before the October Revolution the organised labour movement in *Algeria* covered exclusively workers of European origin, and had almost no Arab or Berber members.² Its development was actively promoted by the Socialists, and later the Communists of France. The Algerian Federation of the Communist Party of France had 1,500 members in 1925.³ Communists were organisers of trade unions, came out for equality of all working people, and fought national seclusion and reformism for unity of the national and democratic forces.⁴

In 1919 7,800 workers took part in 53 strikes, in 1920 6,300 in 20 strikes. During the three-months' strike of railwaymen in 1920 the colonial authorities took mass reprisals against the activists and rank-and-file of the trade unions. In 1923 there were two major actions, by miners and dockers. The strikers demanded an eight-hour day and wage increases. During these strikes Arab and Berber and European workers acted together for the first time, also making political demands.

In *Tunisia* the postwar upsurge of the national liberation and labour movements won its first successes in 1919, when the authorities were forced to extend some of the provisions of the metropolis's labour legislation to the European workers. In 1920 a Tunisian departmental association of trade unions was formed, which affiliated to the General Confederation of Labour of France. But, being led by European workers, it was weakly linked with the Arab workers. In 1924 the revolutionary-minded workers left the CGT and founded

¹ *The Profintern Handbook. The World Trade Union Movement*, Vol. 7, p. 138.

² Larbi Buhali, *The October Revolution and the National Liberation Movement in Algeria*, Moscow, 1957, p. 16 (retranslated from Russian).

³ P. G. Landa, *The Rise of the Anti-Colonial Movement in Algeria in 1918-1931*, Moscow, 1977, pp. 63, 72 (in Russian).

⁴ *Le Parti Communiste Algérien à 25 ans*, Algiers, 1961, p. 2; *The Algerian Communist Party in the War for National Independence*, Moscow, 1961, pp. 19-21 (in Russian).

the Tunisian General Confederation of Labour, headed by Mohammed Ali, to which Arab proletarians also belonged.¹

In the countries of *Tropical Africa* the main result of the socio-economic and political shifts noted there during World War I and afterward was an awakening of the political and national consciousness of their populations, and acceleration of the forming of a local proletariat. In Katanga (Belgian Congo), for example, around 40,000 black workers were employed in mining diamonds and coal, extracting oil, and in building.² Big groups of workers (the majority forcibly drawn into labour or contracted) appeared in Angola, Dahomey, Kenya, Rhodesia, Senegal, and other colonies. Strikes broke out in some places, which were suppressed by the authorities by means of troops. Although the trade union movement had only just been born, and there were no political labour parties, the workers had already begun to take part in the national liberation movement and to take vigorous action in defence of their rights and demands.

* * *

In the post-October period the working men of Africa were still largely a potential revolutionary force, building up internal energy and maturing for the subsequent liberation battles in which the working class played an ever more marked role.

¹ N. A. Ivanov, *Crisis of the French Protectorate in Tunisia*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 57-79 (in Russian).

² *The Working Class of Africa*, p. 42.

Part III
THE WORKING CLASS
IN THE NEW CONDITIONS

Chapter 9

THE TRANSITION FROM ATTACK TO SIEGE

SOVIET RUSSIA AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

In November 1920 Soviet Russia marked the third year of its existence. For the first time it celebrated the anniversary of the Revolution in conditions of peace, as a result of the interaction of the Soviet people's heroic efforts and the fight of the international working class. Although the proletariat had only been able to assert its authority in one country, it had undoubtedly been right, Lenin said, to count on the international revolution. The Communists of Russia had not promised at all to "transform the whole world" by the efforts of one country; they had always stressed that "our revolution will be victorious when it is supported by the workers of all lands. In fact, they went half-way in their support, for they weakened the hand raised against us, yet in doing so they were helping us".¹

By the end of 1920 Soviet Russia had not simply won an immediate temporary breathing spell in the war against the whiteguards and foreign interventionists, but also something much more important. "We have entered a new period," Lenin considered, "in which we have won the right to our fundamental international existence in the network of capitalist states." New conditions had taken shape for the Soviet country in which it could live "side by side with capitalist powers" as an independent state.²

With the ending of the civil war, the question "What next?" faced the country. Attempts had already been made to pass to the building of socialism, Lenin recalled, in the spring of 1918 and in the spring of 1920. Then, however, the peaceful breathing spell had proved very short. "We must now once again give top priority to this transitional stage and exert every effort to achieve it." The start of this

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Our Foreign and Domestic Position and the Tasks of the Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1982, p. 414.

² *Ibid.*, p. 412.

constructive task, i.e. the building of new, socialist economic relations, was an "abrupt and most difficult", transition on the home front, calling "for new methods, a different deployment and use of forces, a different emphasis, a new psychological approach, and so on". On the international plane, the Soviet Republic had to show itself to the whole world as "a force capable not only of resisting any attempt to crush us by force of arms but of setting an example to others."¹

It was necessary, first of all, to tackle the fundamental problem of relations between the Soviet Republic and the capitalist world. "Every people lives in a state," said Lenin, "and every state belongs to a system of states which are in a certain system of political equilibrium in relation to one another."² But was such an equilibrium possible between countries with a different social and political system? The answer to that was not at all clear to everyone then. In the Decree on Peace, it is true, and later during the dispute over the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Lenin had answered it in the affirmative. But the conclusion of peace and the maintenance of peaceful relations is always a two-sided business. Since the imperialists had waged an armed struggle against the Soviet Republic in its first three years, many had begun to get the impression that capitalism and socialism could not in general live peacefully, and that constant war was inevitable between them, all the more so that the RSFSR's many proposals on stopping foreign intervention, lifting the blockade, and establishing commercial relations had been rejected by the capitalist powers each time on one pretext or another, and that all efforts to normalise political and economic relations had failed. Nor had the proposal of the Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Nansen to send food and medicines to Russia had any success, nor the negotiations on the exchange of war prisoners and the repatriation of Russian soldiers from France. All attempts to organise foreign trade, which was completely paralysed, had failed.

The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Georgy Chicherin, speaking at a session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee (ARCEC) in June 1920, at the height of the Polish offensive, had stressed that the policy of the Soviet country "is, as before, a policy of peace and everyone knows that. We want one thing. We want them to leave us alone to develop, because we want to build our new, socialist society in peace. We are not bringing our system or our rule on bayonets, and everyone knows that, nevertheless more and

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Our Foreign and Domestic Position and the Tasks of the Party", *op. cit.*, p. 417.

² V. I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Activists of the Moscow Organisation of the R.C.P.(B.), December 6, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 442.

more new enemies are setting on us.”¹ The Soviet Republic, while unswervingly pursuing a policy of peace, and making territorial and other concessions to neighbours, resolutely rejected any capitulation to its numerous enemies. “We reject insidious smiles, concealing daggers hidden behind the back,” Chicherin said. “We reject the poisoned chalice of false assurances, hiding new attacks in fact behind a friendly exterior. Our first obligation is vigilance and firmness.”²

In disclosing the class character of the diplomacy of the new, proletarian state, Chicherin noted that “the most sophisticated exponents of statecraft, accumulated over many generations” were campaigning against it, that “the noble lords” thought “to deceive us like simpletons”. But communist diplomacy was armed against that by Marxist theory, which made it possible to analyse social relations in depth, and by “that fighting force what is given to it by the proletariat represented by it, inspired by class hatred for its enemies” and at the same time by “its inherent realism, which defies any tricks”.³

Soviet diplomacy answered blow for blow, machinations by unmasking them, and treachery by appealing to the working class and broad masses of other countries. “Our slogan was and remains the same: *peaceful coexistence with other governments whatever they are*. Reality itself led us and other states to the need to create lasting relations between the workers’ and peasants’ government and capitalist governments. These lasting relations were imperatively imposed on us by economic reality.”⁴

Although economic reality called for exchange of goods and comprehensive regulation of relations between countries, the capitalist powers tried again and again to divert the Soviet Republic from peaceful construction, to deepen disorganisation, and so push the country to complete collapse. That policy, however, was doomed. First of all, Soviet Russia’s neighbours that had long been linked with her economically began gradually to come to understand the need to normalise mutually beneficial relations. During 1920 a peace treaty and trade agreement were signed with Estonia, treaties with Lithuania and Latvia, and later with Finland. Trade negotiations were started with Great Britain, France, Holland, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. In March 1921 Soviet Russia signed a peace treaty with Poland, after long negotiations.

¹ G.V. Chicherin’s report to the ARCEC on 17 June 1920. In E.M. Zhukov et al. (Eds.), *Documents of Foreign Policy of the USSR*, Vol. II, Gospolitizdat, Moscow, 1958, p. 638 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 639 (Our italics—Ed.).

The signing of treaties with eastern neighbours was of great importance: in February 1921 with Persia (Iran) and Afghanistan, and in March with Turkey. They stressed recognition of the right of the nations of the East to freedom, independence, and choice of a form of government corresponding to their wishes, and also Soviet Russia's aspiration to establish friendly relations with them.

The Soviet government thus solemnly declared its irrevocable rejection of the "violent policy of the imperialist governments of Russia in relation to Persia", and declared all the tsarist treaties, pacts, conventions, and agreements with Persia that had the effect of reducing the rights of the Persian people "abrogated and deprived of force". "All conventions and agreements concluded by the former government of Russia with third powers to the detriment of Persia and relative to her" were also declared inoperative; railways, highways, telegraph lines, docks, shipping, etc. previously the property of Russia, were handed over gratis to the Persian nation.¹ Lands in the border area that had belonged to Afghanistan in the past century were returned to it, "in accordance with the principle of justice and the free will of the peoples inhabiting them".² Soviet diplomats' instructions stressed the necessity of a policy of peace and friendship, which presupposed mutual assistance. "We say to the Afghan government: we have one system, you have another; we have certain ideals, you have others; but we are linked by a community of aspirations for full sovereignty, independence, and autonomy of our peoples. We shall not interfere in your internal affairs, we shall not intrude upon the independence of your people; we encourage every phenomenon that plays a progressive role in the development of your people. We shall not dream for one moment of saddling your people with a programme that is foreign to them."³ These principles became permanent ones for Soviet diplomacy, and not just in relations with the countries of the East.

The principles of brotherhood of nations, solidarity in the fight against imperialism, and a desire to establish "permanent sincere relations and unbreakable sincere friendship" between the peoples of Soviet Russia and Turkey were written into the preamble of the treaty with Turkey.⁴ All old treaties were abrogated, and Turkey's debts were annulled. The Soviet government rejected the regime of capitulation. The towns of Kars, Ardagan, and Artvin remained with Turkey. The head of the Turkish state, Mustafa Kemal, wrote

¹ Treaty between the RSFSR and Persia, In. G. A. Belov *et al.* (Eds.), *Documents of Foreign Policy of the USSR*, Vol. III, Gospolitizdat, Moscow, 1959, pp. 536-37, 539-40 (in Russian).

² Treaty between Russia and Afghanistan. In G.A. Belov *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 552.

³ Cited from *Lenin and the East*, Moscow, 1960, p. 247 (in Russian).

⁴ Treaty between Russia and Turkey". In G.A. Belov *et al.* (Eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 597.

to Lenin: "Friendship with Russia is constantly ... the foundation of the policy of the government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey."¹

In the summer of 1921 Soviet and Mongolian forces jointly defeated the whiteguard bands of Baron Ungern and occupied Urga (now Ulan Bator), the capital of Mongolia, on July 6. A Mongolian People's Revolutionary Government was formed, which appealed to Soviet Russia not to withdraw some of its troops; with their help the whole country was soon liberated. An emergency mission went to Moscow, headed by Sukhe Bator, the leader of the Mongolian working people. During the talks Lenin said: "And in the future we, Russia and Mongolia, must act ... like older and younger brothers."² On 5 November 1921 an Agreement on Peace and Friendship between the two countries was signed.³

A start was made on building Soviet Russia's relations with countries in the West. In March 1921 the Soviet representative L. B. Krasin signed a trade agreement with Britain; Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, said in the House of Commons that it meant *de facto* recognition of the Soviet government. An agreement was signed with Germany on war prisoners and the restoration of trade relations. The first Balkan country to establish trade links with Soviet Russia was Bulgaria. A trade agreement was signed with Norway. But France, Italy, Japan, Romania, and the USA continued to maintain a hostile attitude to the proletarian state.

In the summer of 1921, and at the end of the year, Lenin described the international situation then as a period of *relative, unstable equilibrium*. Its main elements, as he saw them, were the following: (1) Soviet Russia had been able to hold out against all enemies, which demonstrated the internal strength of the new social system; (2) "the strength of our unity with the workers and *w o r k i n g* *p e o p l e* of all countries had proved greater, stronger, and more powerful than the unity and *c o u p l i n g* of capitalist countries with one another"; opposition to war with Soviet Russia had gripped broad masses of the democratically-minded petty bourgeoisie as well as the revolutionary proletariat, while the contradictions between the

¹ Cited from *Sovetskoye vostokovedenie*, No. 5, 1958, p. 115.

² Cited by A. N. Heifetz from an article "From the Story of the Foreign Relations of the Mongolian People's Republic (1921-1945)", *Sovremennaya Mongolia*, No. 5/6, 1957, p. 25, in his book *Lenin—the Great Friend of the Peoples of the East*, Oriental Literature Publishing House, Moscow, 1960, p. 143 (in Russian).

³ Agreement between the Government of the RSFSR and the People's Revolutionary Government of Mongolia on the establishment of friendly relations between Russia and Mongolia. In M. A. Kharlamov *et al.* (Eds.), *Documents of Foreign Policy of the USSR*, Vol. IV, Gospolitizdat, Moscow, 1960, pp. 476-480 (in Russian).

capitalist powers had continued to sharpen; (3) the inner contradictions of capitalism (the economic crisis, and financial difficulties) had deepened, and "outside" pressure on it from the 4,500 million people oppressed by imperialism had grown.

All that, taken together, Lenin considered, made it possible for the "incredible to become a fact: a socialist republic in a capitalist encirclement". Although the road of international revolution had proved "longer and more zigzag" than had been supposed, it was "the *right road*, otherwise what is (a socialist republic in a capitalist encirclement) would never have happened". He summed up the whole paradoxical character of the situation that had come about as follows: "We are weaker than all of them (materially; militarily; now), and *we are stronger than all*. How? Why? Because world economic and political development as a consequence of the war and since the war is proceeding *as we foresaw*."¹ As a result "international imperialism has proved unable to strangle Soviet Russia ..., [it] has been obliged for the time being to grant her recognition, or semi-recognition", and to sign trade agreements, etc., with her. So it had happened that there was "a state of equilibrium which, although highly unstable and precarious, enables the Socialist Republic to exist—not for long, of course—within the capitalist encirclement".²

"But is the existence of a socialist republic in a capitalist encirclement at all conceivable?"³ This is how he put the point at the Ninth All-Russia Congress of Soviets. In 1921 the question had quite other significance than the theoretical forecast made in 1915-16, than the position of the Decree on Peace, or than his statement at the time of Brest. Now the possibility of the Soviet Republic's independent existence had been incontestably demonstrated both politically and militarily. Now it was only necessary to determine whether stable normalisation of economic relations was possible. Would the capitalists come to this? Or would they surround the Soviet land with a ring of economic blockade? Lenin's answer was based on a sober weighing up of the objective economic patterns established by Marxism: "There is a force more powerful than the wishes, the will and the decisions of any of the governments or classes that are hostile to us. That force is world general economic relations, which compel them to make contact with us."⁴

Time, however, was needed for this force to manifest itself fully.

¹ V.I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 44, 5th Russian Edition, pp. 484-85.

² V.I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International, June 22-July 12, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, 1977, pp. 453-54.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Ninth All-Russia Congress of Soviets. December 23-28, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, 1976, p. 151.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

Meanwhile, the equilibrium reached was still limited, unstable, and not firm; at any moment it might be disturbed by the international capitalist class, which while not having "the opportunity of waging open war against Soviet Russia, is waiting and watching for the moment when circumstances will permit it to resume the war".¹ To that danger Lenin counterposed a Soviet policy of manoeuvring.

Since the time of Brest, he recalled, the political rule "which will remain fundamental with us for a long time until socialism finally triumphs all over the world", which had not only been understood in theory but applied in practice, had remained the urgent need "to take advantage of the antagonisms and the contradictions that exist between the two imperialisms, the two groups of capitalist states... Had we not adhered to this rule, every one of us would have long ago been strung up by the neck, to the glee of the capitalists."²

Lenin fully realised the complexity and ticklishness of Soviet Russia's position in capitalist encirclement. Its foreign policy had to start from the inevitable antagonism of the two different social systems but at the same time had to allow for the interrelation between the policy of the proletarian state and the revolutionary struggle of the working class and the mounting anti-imperialist struggle of the oppressed nations. Application of the principles of proletarian internationalism in the conditions of the beginning of peaceful coexistence with the capitalist world generated new, sometimes not simple problems.

He pointed out one of them immediately. The road of treaties and agreements with capitalist countries, and the granting of concessions to foreign capital, called for compromises and give and take. Where was the line and the limit to be drawn? Brest had already shown, he recalled, that "opportunism means sacrificing fundamental interests so as to gain temporary and partial advantages. That is the gist of the matter, if we consider the theoretical definition of opportunism. Many people have gone astray on this point."³ The practical question of concessions, widely debated in the autumn of 1920 had evoked lots of doubts and misgivings, some naive and some serious. In this connection Lenin several times cited the statement of a non-party peasant at the Arzamas uyezd congress of Nizhny Novgorod Province: "Comrades, we are delegating you to

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International, [June 22-July 12, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 454.

² V.I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Activists of the Moscow Organisation of the R.C.P.(B.), December 6, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 438-39.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 440.

the All-Russia Congress [the Eighth Congress of Soviets.—*Ed.*] and declare that we, peasants, are prepared to endure hunger and cold and do our duty for another three years but don't sell Mother-Russia in the form of concessions." While delighted by this patriotic mood of the masses, and remarking that it manifested the best revolutionary patriotism without which the Soviet Republic would not have held out for three years, Lenin stressed the importance both of explanatory work about the essence of concessions and at the same time of thorough thinking out of a system of guarantees.¹

Concessions, he stressed, using the military parlance customary then, is also war, is "a duel between two methods, political and economic systems—the communist and the capitalist". But it was a new form of war, without weapons and force, by means of influence and example, when "the war of guns and tanks yields place to economic warfare".²

The problem of exploiting the disagreements between enemies also had no few latent complications. If Soviet Russia tried to exploit insignificant and chance disagreements, Lenin said, "we shall be behaving like petty politicians and cheap diplomats. There is nothing of value to be gained by that. There are swarms of diplomats who play this game; they do so for several months, make careers, and then come to grief." It was necessary to exploit the *radical* antagonisms of the capitalist world, only "major differences that are due to profound economic causes". Among these antagonisms Lenin included the contradictions between Japan and America, between America and the rest of the capitalist world, and between the Entente and Germany. Pointing to the rivalry of the USA and Japan in the Far East, which was preventing Japan from seizing Siberia, Lenin remarked: "A war between the imperialist powers would have saved us even more. Whenever thieves fall out, honest men come into their own."³

Such an approach, however, was fraught with much danger, to which the writer of a note sent to Lenin after his report drew attention. "It appears..." it said, "that we are driving Japan and America to war, but it is the workers and peasants who will do the fighting. Although these are imperialist powers, is it worthy of us socialists to drive two powers into a war against each other, which will lead to the shedding of workers' blood?" Lenin attributed great importance to that question, and not only answered its author at a meeting of Moscow activists, but also talked about it in great detail

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, December 22-29, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, 1967, p. 239.

² V.I. Lenin "Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Activists of the Moscow Organisation of the R.C.P.(B), December 6, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 456-59.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 442, 448.

to the communist group at the Eighth Congress of Soviets: "...if we were really driving workers and peasants to war, that would be a crime." But it was a matter of something else. Contradictions and clashes between imperialists were inevitable, without the Land of Soviets. The goal of the Soviet state's policy was to do away with war, but that could only be fully ensured by a world socialist revolution, which the workers of Soviet Russia were bound to encourage.¹

The approach itself to the problems of the international revolution could not, of course, remain static in a situation of unstable equilibrium. It called urgently for a bold search for new solutions, and vigorous making of sharp, sudden turns in both Soviet Russia's home policy and the political line of the Communist International. For all their differences, the two turns made in the spring and summer of 1921 were both inseparably linked with Lenin's name.

THE SEARCH FOR A NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

The years of civil war and foreign intervention showed the strength and viability of the new system born of the October Revolution. But they had given it no chance to take a step forward that would let it develop the productive forces, and visibly demonstrate what immense prospects socialism offered.

The transition to peaceful building of socialism was not just complicated by the enormous disorganisation of the economy, the scale of which only became clear when military operations ceased and demobilisation began. The country proved to have been thrown decades back; industrial production was only a seventh of prewar at the end of 1920, the smelting of steel less than 5 per cent, while transport was paralysed.² It became clear, in the first months of 1921, that reserves of grain had also run out, although more had been collected through surplus grain appropriation system than in the previous year, in spite of a bad harvest and lack of fodder. A tiny increase in the scanty food ration had exhausted all resources. Fuel did not last out till spring; the operational mills and factories were at a standstill. But even that was not the main point. What Lenin called the overwork and exhaustion of the masses was

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, December 22-29, 1920", *op. cit.*, p. 470.

² I. A. Gladkov, "The New Economic Policy—Development of Lenin's Plan for the Building of Socialism". In I. A. Gladkov *et al.* (Eds.), *History of the Socialist Economy of the USSR*, Vol. 2 (*The Transition to the NEP. Restoration of the Economy of the USSR. 1921-1925*), Nauka, Moscow, 1976, p. 10 (in Russian).

most dangerous of all. "[What] can you expect after seven years of war in this country," he said, "if the more advanced countries still feel the effects of four years of war?!"¹ Relations that were only possible in a war situation were unacceptable when peace came.

Not everyone understood that even in the Communist Party. When Trotsky forced a discussion on trade unions, and it turned out that there were various platforms and views on a number of seemingly partial issues, Lenin saw the crux of serious divergences latent in them: that was the question of the "different approach to the mass, the different way of winning it over and *keeping in touch* with it".² The problem of the "party—class—masses" relationship, which he had so clearly and convincingly explained the year before to foreign Communists, unexpectedly now faced the Party, which seemed to have settled it long ago, and called for the adoption of emergency, urgent, extraordinary measures.

Questions were raised during the party discussion not just of the forms and methods of managing the socialist economy; in the final analysis it was a matter of the relationships between the Party, state, and masses of the working people, and the role of the working class in the proletarian state system. Trotsky and his supporters developed plans for militarisation of the whole economy. The War Communism methods of management that had taken shape during the civil war and were forced by emergency circumstances, were represented as the optimum for the whole period of building socialism. A role of appendages of the state authorities, operating as means of coercion in regard to the masses, was allotted to the trade unions, which should be "shaken up" in Trotsky's expression. Adoption of such a line would only have deepened the internal crisis, already caused by the disparity between the methods of War Communism and the altered situation.

At the same time the leaders of the "workers' opposition" (A. G. Shlyapnikov, A. M. Kollontai, S. P. Medvedev, and others) had put forward another platform, proposing the setting up of an elected body to manage the economy, a "congress of producers", with management of industries and individual enterprises passed to the appropriate trade unions and personnel. They demanded abolition of the Supreme Economic Council, and retention of a purely administrative function by the state, and of an agitational-propagandist role by the Party.

Although the positions of the Trotskyites and supporters of the "workers' opposition" seemed to be diametrically opposed, they were

¹ V.I. Lenin "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 8-16, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 224.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Trade Unions, the Present Situation, and Trotsky's Mistakes", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 22.

united by lack of faith in the capacity of the Party and the Soviet state to guide the processes of the socio-economic restructuring of society. The social basis of their views (and also of the proposals expressed in other platforms, e.g. Bukharin's "buffer" one, and that of the "democratic centralists") was the effect of the petty-bourgeois environment on unstable members of the Party, who were overwhelmed by the difficulties of the unexplored road. The members of the oppositions displayed incomprehension of the peculiarities of the laws of development of the socialist revolution and underestimated the constructive tasks of the proletarian state.

The public, theoretical discussion in the ruling party was, in Lenin's expression, "an amazing luxury ... too great a luxury ... an impermissible luxury"¹ given the immense difficulties of the transition to peaceful economic activity, an orgy of petty-bourgeois anarchy, and the aggressive actions of capitalist encirclement. It not only diverted the party from tackling urgent, very pressing problems, but also gave the hostile forces that saw a weakening of the Communists in their differences and disputes a chance to increase their attacks on Soviet power.

Nevertheless the discussion was held. The Central Committee came out with its own platform drafted on the basis of theses by J. E. Rudzutak (who was then a member of the Presidium and General Secretary of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions [AUCCTU]), and signed by a majority of the Central Committee. It embodied Lenin's ideas that trade unions, the most mass organisation of the working class, were an "organisation designed for education. It is an organisation designed to draw in and to train; it is, in fact, a school: a school of administration, a school of economic management, a school of communism",² and that their main method of work was conviction and not coercion. Their job was to develop labour democracy in every way and to raise the creative activity of the masses. Lenin's point of view was completely victorious as a result of the disputes. The mistaken statements of Trotsky, Bukharin, and others were refuted by principled criticism. The danger of an anarchosyndicalist deviation was noted, the bearers of which were the leaders of the "workers' opposition".

At the same time Lenin criticised bureaucratism, and called on the speakers in the discussion to work in a business-like way and develop inner-party democracy.³ In order to save the Party

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 8-16, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 168, 176.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Trade Unions, the Present Situation, and Trotsky's Mistakes", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 20.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 8-16, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 200, 203, 210-13, 255-56, 260.

from the danger of a split in the future, and to give it a chance to guide the millions of the masses in the building of socialism and govern a country that was mainly petty bourgeois, it was necessary to ensure its internal unity, ideological consistency, iron discipline and intolerance of opportunist wavering and shilly-shallying and factional strife. The Tenth Party Congress created those conditions.¹

By the spring of 1921 it had become clear that the hope that they would be able to undertake solution of the main job of building socialism, namely, the restoration and rapid development of large-scale industry (the goal of the Ninth Congress of the RCP[B] and the GOELRO plan) had not been justified. An even more urgent task had presented itself, viz., the necessity of finding special transitional measures to ensure the establishment of proper economic relations between the two main classes of Soviet society, i.e. the workers and the peasants.

The position of the working class was most difficult. Having taken on leadership of the country and shouldered the main burden of the civil war, it had been weakened by the end of it. "The terrible crises and the closing down of the factories," Lenin said, "have compelled people to flee from starvation. The workers have simply abandoned their factories; they have had to settle down in the country."² Or they had taken to making cigarette-lighters in big factories to swap for bread. The working class, Lenin wrote a little later, was "dislodged from its class groove. The factories and mills are idle—the proletariat is weak, scattered, enfeebled".³ The state of "protracted starvation, want and food shortage, which create the danger that the proletariat will be utterly exhausted and will give way to petty-bourgeois vacillation and despair", Lenin said, "had gone on too long."⁴ In the spring of 1921 Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries had been able to instigate workers to strike in certain towns, including Petrograd and Moscow, exploiting their dissatisfaction. In order to improve the workers' position the Soviet government decided to postpone the planned purchase of machinery and industrial equipment abroad, and to allot ten million roubles in gold for the immediate purchase of food and coal.

¹ *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1979, pp. 301-02 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 8-16 1921", *op. cit.*, p. 199.

³ V.I. Lenin, "New Times and Old Mistakes in a New Guise", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 23-24.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 8-16, 1921", *op. cit.*, pp. 237-38; see also V.I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at the All-Russia Congress of Transport Workers, March 27, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 274.

The peasantry was also suffering from disorganisation and disruption, malnutrition, and the lack of industrial goods. Its dissatisfaction with the policy of War Communism, especially with surplus grain requisitioning, was growing. Demobilisation was returning thousands of people to town and country who had been cut off from peaceful labour for many years. Since many of them had not found jobs in production, the soil was created for a growth of banditry.

Kulak uprisings had been widespread in a number of areas of the Ukraine, the North Caucasus, the Volga Area, the central provinces, and Siberia, since the autumn of 1920. The biggest was the mutiny raised by the Socialist-Revolutionary Antonov in the Tambov Province, which spread to five counties. Most serious of all was the fact that middle peasants, and sometimes the poor began to be drawn into the movement. At the beginning of March 1921 the Kronstadt mutiny broke out. The sailors involved were for the most part drawn from the peasantry. The mutiny was led by Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, while whiteguards planted the slogan "Soviets without Communists" among the mutineers. This petty-bourgeois, anarchistic counter-revolution, Lenin considered, was "undoubtedly more dangerous than Denikin, Yudenich, and Kolchak put together, because ours is a country where the proletariat is in a minority".¹ He phrased the essence of the mutiny as follows: "Economics in the spring of 1921 transformed into politics: 'Kronstadt'."² The mutiny was quickly suppressed, but the danger of new actions remained.

In the plan for his report to the Tenth Congress, analysing the situation from various aspects, Lenin wrote that it was a matter of "*peasant (petty-bourgeois) counter-revolution. Such counter-revolution is already facing us.*"³ He saw the seriousness of the situation in the fact that "we have not beaten this petty-bourgeois-anarchist element, and the immediate fate of the revolution now depends on whether or not we succeed in doing so. If we do not, we shall slide down as the French Revolution did. This is inevitable, and we must not let ourselves be misled by phrases and excuses".⁴ He was seriously concerned then by the comparison between the Russian 1921 and the French 1794 events.

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 8-16 1921", *op. cit.*, p. 184.

² V.I. Lenin, "Plan of the Pamphlet 'The Tax in Kind'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 327.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Notes for a Speech at the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) on the Substitution of Food Requisitioning by a Tax", *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, 1971, p. 535.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at the All-Russia Congress of Transport Workers, March 27, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 282.

Still, the political danger hanging over Soviet power was not the primary cause of Lenin's posing the need for a change of approach in the economy. Even before the political position had become critical, he had already had the idea that there must be a complete turn in the economic relations of proletariat and peasantry. At the end of 1920 he had noted that the country was entering "a transition period within a transition period", i.e. the end of the war, demobilisation, and the transition to peaceful labour were leading to the proletarian class's relations with the peasant class beginning to change. "What kind of change is it? Now this calls for a close examination. Until we have taken this close look, we must learn to wait."¹ But waiting did not mean passivity; on the contrary, a period of the most intensive search began for a *new economic policy* that would correspond to the changed conditions.²

While some party workers saw the way out in intensifying government control of agriculture, Lenin more and more inclined to the need to allow for the peasants' wishes for replacement of surplus grain requisitioning by tax in kind, basing himself on talks with many peasants, reading of letters from the localities, meetings with delegates and peasant deputies to the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, and discussions with comrades in the People's Commissariats for Food and Land, etc. He proceeded from the fact that coexistence with petty peasant producers (there were around 22 million small and tiny peasant farms in the country) would be protracted, and that it was impossible to neglect material stimuli to raise production. Later he told foreign Communists that the radical decision "was not invented at one stroke. You will find a number of proposals in the Bolshevik press over a period of months, but no plan that really promised success."³

On 8 February 1921, at a session of the Politbureau that discussed the spring sowing campaign and the position of the peasantry, Lenin sketched a "Rough Draft of Theses Concerning the Peasants" that was the basis of the subsequent decisions. The first point read: "Satisfy the wish of the non-Party peasants for the substitution of a tax in kind for the surplus appropriation system (the confiscation of surplus grain stocks)." Furthermore, he proposed reducing its rate compared with surplus requisitioning, to relate it to the diligence of "those making the greater effort" and, with rapid, full pay-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Trade Unions, the Present Situation, and Trotsky's Mistakes", *op. cit.*, p. 32.

² For fuller details see Yu. A. Polyakov, *The Transition to the NEP and the Soviet Peasantry*, Moscow, 1967; E.B. Genkina, *Lenin's Activity in Government, 1921-1923*, Moscow, 1969; Yu. A. Polyakov and V.P. Dmitrenko, *The Transition to the New Economic Policy*, Moscow, 1972 (all in Russian).

³ V.I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International, June 22-July 12, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 487.

ment of the tax, to extend freedom of "using his after-tax surpluses in local trade".¹ Thus the new approach to dealing with the economic relations of the working class and peasantry was found.

A month later, at the Tenth Congress of the RCP(B), and in his subsequent writings, Lenin gave a developed estimate of the sharp turn in economic policy, saying that it would promote integral, mutual link between industrialisation, and electrification of the country and the socialist transformation of rural areas. Movement along the road of building socialism, moreover, could and should start with revival of agriculture and petty production, because that would create the conditions needed for a general economic and social upswing.

Lenin considered it very important, when speaking of the need to review the working class's relations with the peasantry, to declare openly: "We know that so long as there is no revolution in other countries, only agreement with the peasantry can save the socialist revolution in Russia."² And a little later he put the gist of the NEP as follows: "Ten or twenty years of regular relations with the peasantry and victory is assured on a world scale (even if there is delay in the proletarian revolutions, which are maturing); otherwise 20-40 years of tormenting whiteguard terror. *Aut—aut. Tertium non datur.*"³

He stressed that, taking into account the will of the vast masses of the working population, it was necessary above all to satisfy the middle peasantry economically; and there was no means for doing that other than to take a step toward free trade. "How then can the Communist Party," Lenin said, "recognise freedom to trade and accept it? Does not the proposition contain irreconcilable contradictions?... Can freedom of trade, freedom of capitalist enterprise for the small farmer, be restored to a certain extent without undermining the political power of the proletariat?" And, while pointing out the difficulty of coping with the problem in practice, he answered: "Yes, it can, for everything hinges on the extent."⁴

Lenin explained that the Party had gone too far in nationalising trade and industry in the conditions of civil war and the policy of War Communism. It had been justified in wartime, but it was now clear that a whole series of transitional steps and special transitional measures were needed. Replacement of grain requisitioning by a tax

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Rough Draft of Theses Concerning the Peasants", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 133.

² V.I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 8-16, 1921", *op. cit.*, p. 215.

³ "Either—or. There is no third way" (*Trans.*). V.I. Lenin, "Plan of the Pamphlet 'The Tax in Kind'", *op. cit.*, p. 323-24.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 8-16, 1921", *op. cit.*, p. 218-19.

was only the first of them. "We must not close our eyes to the fact that ... [it] will mean more kulaks under the new system. This must not be combated by prohibitive measures but by association under state auspices and by government measures from above." Local trade was "to give the small farmer an incentive and a spur to till the soil. We must adapt our state economy to the economy of the middle peasant, which we have not managed to remake in three years, and will not be able to remake in another ten years."¹

The replacement of grain requisitioning by a tax in kind was motivated in the resolution unanimously passed by the congress by the need "to ensure proper, peaceful farming on the basis of the tiller's free disposal of his economic resources", and "to consolidate the peasant smallholding and increase its productivity ... [and] precisely fix the state obligations falling on the tillers". The resolution pointed out that the tax must be less than the amount requisitioned and progressive, and proposed fixing its rate before the spring sowing began. Concessions were provided for the diligent peasant smallholder who increased his crop area and raised the productivity of his holding.² The other congress resolutions spoke of reviewing financial policy, of emergency measures to improve the position of workers and very needy peasants, of attracting foreign capital by way of concessions, above all in those industries that Soviet Russia could not manage to develop by its own forces in the immediate future (lumbering, mining, the oil industry, and electrification), so as to raise the republic's productive forces and "improve the position of the main productive force, the working class".³

These resolutions involved the adoption of legislative measures. The rate of the tax on grain, potatoes, meat, butter, and other farm produce was fixed; for the RSFSR it was almost half as much, or lower, than the scale of grain requisitioning. A considerable part of the poorest peasantry was completely exempted from tax. In connection with the natural calamities that befell the country in the summer of 1921 (drought and famine), which affected the Volga Area and many other areas, all the famine-stricken provinces were exempted from tax. In provinces where requisitioning had ended, free buying and selling of food were permitted, and boundary posts were removed. A decree on consumer co-operatives established their right to procure farm produce, and to trade in agricultural, craft, and cottage-industry items. Opportunities were provided for a display of private initiative in the production of consumer goods; it was per-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 8-16, 1921", *op. cit.*, pp. 225, 226-27.

² *Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 1921, Verbatim Report*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1963, pp. 608-09 (in Russian).

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 609-11.

mitted to found small-scale and cottage industries, and carry on private trade.¹

The peasants immediately felt relieved. The change in their mood created favourable conditions for liquidating the Antonov revolt in the Tambov Province and other uprisings. Soon Makhno, the biggest of the "atamans" in the Ukraine, fled to Romania.

Things had to go further as regards trade than was originally proposed. The attempt to rely only on local turnover, and to oppose government trade to private, was not successful. Barter did not satisfy the peasants, who preferred free market relations, buying and selling for cash, and trade. When it became clear that things could not be managed without development of free trade, Lenin wrote in October: "*Life has frustrated barter and put buying and selling in its place.*" That meant that it was necessary, in the fight for socialism, "to take another step back, to retreat again". He insisted on that point for the sake of "*the close alliance, connection, and economic union of the proletarian state and the petty peasant masses through trade.*"²

It was urgently necessary, in the existing situation, to develop state trade system (especially wholesale trade) and co-operation. There needed to be a reduction in the emission of paper money (during the civil war the number of notes had increased by at least 20-fold, and their value had fallen), the founding of a State Bank, and then of a Co-operative Bank, etc., and the creation of a Soviet credit system, in order to put the whole financial system in order. The extension and consolidation of money-exchange relations entailed radical changes in the whole system of managing the economy. One of the first steps toward employing value levers of administration was the introduction of management accounting in the public sector. Trusts had been set up on a profit-and-loss basis, Lenin wrote, precisely for them to be "responsible, and, moreover, fully responsible, for their enterprises working without a deficit".³ Planned guidance of the economy was strengthened. A State Planning Commission (Gosplan) was instituted in February 1921 on the basis of the GOELRO Commission, headed by the "poet of power engineering" G. M. Krzhizhanovski. Its first job was to draft a single, national economic plan and to exercise control over its implementation. On that plane it had (in Lenin's view) to determine the economic proportions and inter-sectoral and inter-area connections correctly, ensure co-ordination of contiguous sectors of social production, the extractive and manufacturing industries, agriculture and industry, transport and the national economy, growth

¹ Yu. A. Polyakov, V.P. Dmitrenko, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-28.

² V.I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, 5th Russian Edition, Vol. 44, pp. 471, 487.

³ V.I. Lenin, "To G.Y. Sokolnikov", *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, 1976, p. 546.

of production and consumption, etc. The government obliged Gosplan to ensure a combination of long-term and current economic planning: current plans were to be based on the long-term GOELRO plan. Major specialists in the most important sectors of the economy, scientists and engineers like I. G. Alexandrov, V. R. Williams, I. M. Gubkin, D. N. Pryanishnikov and S. G. Strumilin, were appointed to Gosplan.

The new economic policy proposed to abolish wages in kind and to go over from wage levelling to a piece-rate system. The role of material stimuli in raising productivity and strengthening work discipline rose, and the production activity of the working class was intensified. The CPC Guidelines of 9 August 1921 on making a start on the new economic policy, drafted under Lenin's supervision, envisaged broader involvement "of the trade unions, and through them of the workers themselves, in deciding matters of organisation, management of production, and job organisation in public industry."¹ The unions, attaching priority importance to the restoration and development of the economy, took part in getting factories and mills working again. A resolution of the Tula Provincial Council of Trade Unions, for example, said: "At the present moment of economic reconstruction and directing of all the country's forces to practical construction, the trade unions must be that heroic support for the restoration of large-scale industry that lies ahead. While recognising the significance of trade unions as 'a school of communism', we must work to see that this school is built on a solid production base."²

Lenin considered that one of the main jobs of the unions under the new economic policy was once more to become the defenders of the proletariat's direct interests in capitalist and public enterprises. Although the class struggle differed essentially from that under capitalism, it continued to exist. It was impossible, therefore, in general, to ban strikes, although the normal means of settling conflicts consisted in workers' direct appeal to government bodies. Since compulsory membership of trade unions did not correspond either to "the present degree of socialisation achieved in industry or with the level of development of the masses",³ its voluntary character was restored. The basis of successful trade union work could only be their close, daily link with the masses. Trade union officials, he wrote, "should live right among the workers, study their lives in every detail, and be able unerringly, on any question, and at any

¹ *Izvestia VTsIK*, 11 August 1921.

² *October Revolution Central State Archives (ORCSA)*, f. 5451, op. 5, d. 475, l. 104.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Draft Theses on the Role and Functions of the Trade Unions under the New Economic Policy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, 1969, p. 378.

time, to judge the mood, the real needs, aspirations, and thoughts of the masses. They must be able without a shadow of false idealisation to define the degree of their class-consciousness and the extent to which they are influenced by various prejudices and survivals of the past; and they must be able to win the boundless confidence of the masses by a comradely attitude and concern for their needs."¹

In the spring of 1918, when the need to pass from "meeting democracy" to organised labour discipline had arisen, Lenin had spoken of two categories of democratic function in the transition period. Now he just as directly and frankly brought out the dual position of trade unions: their main method was discussion and education; at the same time they could not refuse to take part in state compulsion; although specifically military methods were not in the least proper to them, they had to work with military efficiency; they had to know how to adapt themselves to the masses and their present level, but in no way to pander to their "prejudices and backwardness..., but steadily raise them to a higher and higher level".² This idea was expressed most sharply in the formula: "Do not flatter the masses, do not lose touch with the masses."³ Lenin considered that these contradictions were "no accident, and they [would] persist for several decades", because they were inherent in any school, and the trade unions were "a school of communism". Trade union officials therefore needed "special tact...[and] ability to approach the masses in a special way";⁴ and the inevitable conflicts, lack of co-ordination, and frictions had to be resolved immediately at the highest level.

Lenin was also disturbed by the workers' attitude to specialists who worked conscientiously. In developing his earlier ideas, he stressed that it was absolutely necessary to see to it (although it could not be done quickly) that specialists "lived better under socialism than under capitalism, both materially and legally, both as regards comradely co-operation with workers and peasants and as regards ideas, i.e., as regards satisfaction from their work and consciousness of its social usefulness". In that connection he sharply condemned the workers' hounding and even murder of engineers that were happening (in the Urals and the Donbas). He demanded extreme measures of punishment for the offenders and provision of the widest publicity. "We must sound the big bells."⁵

An important instrument for unions' exercising of their organisa-

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 381-82.

² *Ibid.*, p. 383.

³ V.I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 44, 5th Russian Edition, p. 498.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Draft Theses on the Role and Functions of the Trade Unions under the New Economic Policy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 383.

⁵ V.I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 44, 5th Russian Edition, pp. 349-51, 497.

tional and economic functions was the production meeting. At these meetings urgent problems of the working of individual enterprises were considered, viz., production discipline, labour productivity, the use of equipment, long-term development plans, etc.

The labour enthusiasm of the working class found expression, just as during the civil war, in numerous *subbotniks* (voluntary Saturday work pay-free), and similar Sundays, to lay in fuel and raw materials, repair equipment, and help rural areas. The new conditions also evoked other forms of initiative. In the pits of the Donbas, for example, and in works in the Urals, Moscow, Petrograd, Tula and other industrial centres, the first shock teams arose during socialist emulation, which achieved higher productivity through dedicated work. The central committee of the engineering workers' union adopted a special rule on the rights and obligations of members of shock groups, which said: "Every member of a group is obliged to do the maximum practicable in performing his job. A shock worker is an example of strict, unconditional observance of all the rules of work discipline established by the union."¹

The Communist Party constantly supported and developed the creative initiative of advanced workers. Each major achievement at work was reported in the press and made known to the broad masses. It became common to honour advanced workers. The best work collectives and workers were awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Labour, which was instituted in December 1920. This high sign of labour excellence was awarded to the Arsenal and the Munitions Works in Tula. Its first recipients included T. M. Charikov, an engine-driver of the Samara-Zlatoust railway, and A. K. Pichugin, a worker of the Rostov Tinplate Works.

Boards of Honour were instituted in mills and factories. At the Sormovo Engineering Works (in Nizhny Novgorod), for instance, the names of 529 best production workers were inscribed on the Board of Honour in the winter of 1921. S. Chesnov, a fitter, was honoured in this way for his careful attitude to the job and overtime work; I. Pudov, a turner, for fulfilling jobs over and above the norm and high quality of work; M. Chumakov, a foreman, and P. Lypin, a fitter, for high productivity.²

The very best workers were awarded the title of Hero of Labour by their work collective. As a rule they were the most skilled of the cadre. In 1921 the workers of the Moscow Motor Works (AMO), for instance, honoured a joiner, I. I. Egorov, a member of the Party, as a Hero of Labour. He had started work at the age of 13, had been a member of a fighting squad in 1905 and wounded in the fighting in

¹ *Byulleten TsK VSRM*, 1921, No. 10, p. 3.

² A.A. Matyugin, *The Working Class of the USSR during the Years of Economic Reconstruction 1921-1925*, Moscow, 1962, p. 283 (in Russian).

Presnya. In spite of being disabled he honourably did his duties and set an example of heroism in labour. In 1921 the title Hero of Labour was awarded to several workers in the Izhevsk Small Arms Works, who had worked there for more than 50 years.¹

The new economic relations between socialist industry and petty-commodity agriculture, developed by the Russian Communist Party on Lenin's initiative, and with his personal involvement, became the basis for gradual restoration of the productive forces in agriculture, and for an upswing of industry and transport. An enormous natural calamity—prolonged drought and crop failure in the summer of 1921 in the Volga cereal areas, North Caucasus, and south of the Ukraine, intensified the government's difficulties in this field. The terrible famine gripped more than 30 provinces with a population of more than 30 million. The Party issued a slogan "Everything to Fight Famine!" Special agencies were set up, headed by an All-Russia Commission to Aid the Starving, chaired by M. I. Kalinin. Public works were started in localities, a national week of Aid for the Starving was held, and an All-Russia subbotnik; food and seed were collected, deductions made from earnings, and children's homes instituted for the suffering children. Friendly aid came from abroad—from workers and progressive democratic organisations.² In those exceptionally difficult conditions the heroic efforts of workers and peasants provided the first successes of the new economic policy.

This policy immediately went well beyond the limits just of economic relations, spreading as well to the area of social, political, cultural, and psychological relations. When explaining the essence of the "abrupt turn" of the Soviet government to a congress of officials of political education committees, Lenin said that the economic and political crisis had pushed the revolution to "the brink of the precipice which all previous revolutions reached and recoiled from". There had been no other road than temporary retreat, and could not be. The issue was the following: "*Who will win, the capitalist or Soviet power?*" "Who will win? Who will gain the upper hand?" Would the capitalists be able to organise themselves first? Or would "the proletarian state power, with the support of the peasantry, ...prove capable of keeping a proper rein on those gentlemen, the capitalists, so as to direct capitalism along state channels and to create capitalism that will subordinate to the state"³ and thus open the road to socialism?

The military task of defeating the whiteguards and interventionists could be settled by an offensive, a raid, the enthusiasm of the

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 284-85.

² For further details see Chapter 11.

³ V.I. Lenin, "The New Economic Policy and the Tasks of the Political Education Departments", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 65-67 (Our italics.—Ed.)

workers and peasants. But the struggle that now lay ahead, Lenin emphasised, would be more stubborn and difficult, because the enemy in the economy is not visible, and the fight against him called for unaccustomed methods and holds. There had never been such a war of a proletarian state against the capitalist class of its own country and the united capitalist classes of all countries. A frontal attack could not cope with such a vast task. A flanking movement was needed; "... the method of siege and undermining".¹ It was necessary to introduce the principle of personal self-interest and responsibility, and strict discipline, and to learn how to trade and do business. One of the primary tasks in this, and one of the most complicated, was to achieve a considerable rise in culture; and there the enemy was communist superciliousness and conceit, illiteracy, and bribery. The "four commandments" of the fight against them, Lenin formulated as follows: "(1) Don't split hairs, don't be pompous in your communism, don't use great words to cover up your slackness, idleness, apathy, backwardness; (2) Wipe out illiteracy; (3) Fight graft; (4) Check all your work, so that words should not remain words, by *practical* successes in economic construction."²

How did the NEP fit into the general, international outlook for the socialist revolution and building of socialism? That question called for earnest theoretical consideration, and a new "checking" of practice and theory, which Lenin undertook in his pamphlet *The Tax in Kind*, in his theses and report on the tactics of the RCP at the Third Congress of the Comintern, and in several subsequent speeches. Underlying former ideas and estimates of the building of a socialist society as a result of an international revolution, Lenin stressed, had always been the notion that there would be "a flourishing large-scale industry" *on a world scale* "capable of supplying the world with all kinds of goods" and "there can be no doubt that a direct transition to socialism is possible".³ The small producers and peasants, getting industrial items, would see the advantages of large-scale production and farming in practice, and would therefore pass quite quickly to social, collective labour. "That is how Marxists and all socialists who have given thought to the social revolution and its tasks have always regarded the question in theory," he recalled.⁴

¹ V. I. Lenin "The New Economic Policy and the Tasks of the Political Education Departments", *op. cit.*, p. 69.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74; 77-79; V.I. Lenin, "Notes for a Report at the Second All-Russia Congress of Political Education Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, 1971, p. 550.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Ninth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, December 23-28, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 157, 160.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 8-16, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 186.

There had been no such developed and flourishing industry in Russia at the time of the October Revolution; and because of the delay in the revolution in the West it had been impossible to count on industrial help from Europe. At the end of 1917 an idea had grown up among Russian Bolsheviks, therefore, of two possible roads of development of the revolution: "a relatively short road" and "a very long and difficult road".¹

But then, when appraising the outlook, he recalled, "...we in most cases—I can scarcely recall an exception—started out with the assumption—perhaps not always openly expressed but always tacitly taken for granted—that we would be able to proceed straight away with socialist construction". In the spring of 1918 this transition had been imagined as realisable "without a preliminary period in which the old economy would be adapted to socialist economy".² Later, during the civil war, the policy of War Communism reluctantly adopted had accelerated steps toward socialism; "the sterner the struggle became, the less chance there was of a cautious transition".³ The War Communism policy ensured the main object, viz., victory over the enemy, but it was not the normal road to building socialism. In peacetime conditions it proved quite unacceptable.

When generalising Russia's experience, and examining it in the light of the general patterns on an international scale, Lenin stressed that there was "no doubt whatever that the transition from capitalism to socialism is conceivable in different forms, depending upon whether big capitalist or small production relationships predominate in the country".⁴ A direct transition was only possible economically when large-scale production was strongly developed in both industry and agriculture, i.e., only in developed capitalist countries. In most countries where a considerable part of the population consisted of petty producers, primarily peasants, the transition was possible "only through the implementation of a whole series of special transitional measures" of a national character.⁵

But it was not just a matter of finding the most suitable economic forms for the transition. The most important task of building socialism in all capitalist countries, and at the same time the most difficult one, was socio-political, viz., to ensure a firm alliance of the proletariat and peasantry or—more broadly—the petty-bourgeois masses (including the urban petty bourgeoisie), which could only be

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Seventh Moscow Gubernia Conference of the Russian Communist Party, October 29-31, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 87.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 8-16, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, 1973, p. 233.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

drawn into the business of socialist reforms under the leadership of the working class. Lenin suggested that it was possible to make an exception only for Great Britain (where the class of petty tenant farmers was small in numbers). He noted, however, that "the percentage of workers and office employees who enjoy a petty-bourgeois standard of living is exceptionally high, due to the actual enslavement of hundreds of millions of people in Britain's colonial possessions."¹ Continuing to develop that idea he said it was impossible to "get rid" of the classes of petty producers and smallholders by the same methods as were used against big landowners and capitalists; it was impossible to expropriate them or dismiss them. They were a very big minority everywhere—30 to 45 per cent of the population; and if you added the "petty-bourgeois elements of the working class" more than 50 per cent.²

The considerable weight of the intermediate or "middle" strata in developed capitalist countries confronted the revolutionaries with an important problem that had not yet been quite worked out. When speaking about its solution Lenin pointed directly to the experience of the Russian NEP and its value for "the future proletarian revolutions": "From the international standpoint, if we regard the international revolution as one process, the significance of the period into which we are now entering in Russia is, in essence, that we must now find a practical solution for the problem of the relations the proletariat should establish with this last capitalist class in Russia." And further, "All Marxists have a correct and ready solution for this problem in theory. But theory and practice are two different things, and the practical solution of this problem is by no means the same as the theoretical solution. We know definitely that we have made serious mistakes. From the international standpoint, it is a sign of great progress that we are now trying to determine the attitude the proletariat in power should adopt towards the last capitalist class—the rock-bottom of capitalism—small private property, the small producer."³

When he examined the concrete problem of the proletariat's relations with the peasantry, he stressed the difficulty, but at the same time the economic and political possibility, of establishing a close alliance between them. The Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks had attached a different objective sense to this alliance. The Bolsheviks tried to draw the peasants after them for joint struggle against, and victory over, the exploiters, having in mind a strengthening of the proletariat's position and consolidation of its power. The Menshe-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International, June 22-July 12, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 456.

² *Ibid.*, p. 484.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 484-85.

viks, however, as "pure democrats", wanted to give the peasants and petty bourgeoisie the possibility to decide things "by majority", i.e., obviously, to decide against the proletariat and in favour of capitalism. The alliance achieved by the Bolsheviks had been, at first, a military one, whose economic basis was the following: "The peasants received from the workers' state all the land and were given protection against the landowners and the kulaks; the workers have been receiving from the peasants loans of food supplies until large-scale industry is restored." That was the necessary form of alliance, forced, even primitive, Kautsky and Bauer jeering at it in vain.¹

Another task had arisen with the ending of the civil war, viz., to establish a firm, "proper", economic union. An easy solution was possible in theory if large-scale industry and transport could provide the peasants with everything they needed. But since they were practically non-existent, the second, difficult variant had to be chosen, viz., to demonstrate to the broad masses of the peasantry Soviet power's *readiness* immediately to ease their poverty by replacing requisitioning of surpluses by a tax. That meant freedom to trade, a certain freedom for capitalism, the revival of state capitalism (including concessions, mixed enterprises, etc.), which would, however, be under the proletarian state's control and so not dangerous. The interest paid to concessionaires was "tribute which the workers' state pays to the world bourgeoisie", payment for backwardness, weakness, and learning. The Russian Communists did not hide that, Lenin said. But "we gain time, and gaining time means gaining everything, particularly in the period of equilibrium".²

When explaining the necessity of the NEP he recalled that "the revolution demands sacrifices" without which nothing could be done. And since revolution "differs from ordinary struggle in that ten and even a hundred times more people take part in it" than normally, it meant "sacrifices not only for individuals, but for a whole class".³ There was no getting around that, and Communists must not blind themselves to it.

The issue was quite something else: "*How are we to distribute this burden of privation?* (our italics.—*Ed.*)... what is to be our principle? Is it to be that of fairness, or of majority?" No, Lenin answered: "We must act in a practical manner. We must distribute the burdens in such a way as to preserve the power of the proletariat. This is our only principle."⁴ Therefore, despite the fact that the greater share of the suffering and privations had been the lot of the proletariat during the revolution, and the peasantry had been the winner,

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 456-57, 485, 487.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 457, 458, 492.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 488.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 488-89.

the situation was such that help must be given to the peasantry first and foremost, "and at any price, in the interests of the proletarian state. The vanguard of the working class has realised this, but in that vanguard there are still people who cannot understand it, and who are too weary to understand it. They regarded it as a mistake and began to use the word 'opportunism'. ...But is that opportunism? We are helping the peasants because without an alliance with them the political power of the proletariat is impossible, its preservation is inconceivable."¹

Going back to the initial premise that the sole possible material and economic basis for socialism was large-scale machine industry corresponding to the latest in engineering, and also capable of reorganising farming, Lenin stressed that it would take decades to restore Russia's disorganised industry on the old basis. The road of building a new scientific and technical foundation, the road of *electrification*, had therefore been chosen. Only that could provide a comparatively rapid transition "from patriarchalism ... to socialism". But what it had been easy to do in Sweden, Germany, and America, would take decades for the first stage in Russia. That period could only be reduced "if the proletarian revolution is victorious in such countries as Britain, Germany, or the USA".²

The "*abrupt change of policy of the Soviet Government and the RCP*", as Lenin characterised the transition to the new economic policy,³ affected not only all areas of economic, social, political, and cultural relations in Soviet society, but also its relations with the outside world. It was not surprising that it evoked a vast response both within the country and in the international arena. The enemies of the revolution looked on it with joy as "the Bolsheviks' recognition of their collapse" and as the "beginning" of Russia's "return" to capitalism. Martov, for example, talked of an "economic Thermidor" that would necessarily lead to an "Eighteenth Brumaire". Other Mensheviks, and of course Kautsky and Bauer, spoke in the same spirit.

Kautsky wrote a whole book in the summer of 1921 (which Bauer hastened to call "wonderful") in order to "derive" justification from the Russian experience for rejection of the socialist revolution in general. If the Bolsheviks, he said, had had the Mensheviks' remarkable quality of "self-restraint to the attainable", it would not have taken four years to convince them that the Russian Revolution could only be a bourgeois one. He again prophesied either "a repeat of the 9 Thermidor" (or "of the Decembrists' uprising with a better

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International, June 22-July 12, 1921", pp. 489-90.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Tax in Kind", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 350.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The New Economic Policy and the Tasks of the Political Education Departments", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 60.

success than before"), or voluntary capitulation by the Bolsheviks through "political concessions", and the Communists' rejection of their illusory "autocracy", and restoration of "democracy" in Russia. Kautsky gloated over the forced retreat to state capitalism for dozens of pages. It was not possible, he again declared, to overcome capitalism during its crisis, but only when it was flourishing, when the proletariat would become "more determined and ready to struggle". He called in general for rejection of the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat.¹

Bauer, too, soon responded to the new economic policy with a pamphlet on the "new course" in Soviet Russia. The NEP, he said, "confirmed" his ideas about economic development. Nothing was possible in Russia except capitalism. He therefore advised the Bolsheviks, no more and no less, to capitulate voluntarily: "to liquidate the dictatorship of the proletariat peacefully" and to take the road of bourgeois democracy. He warned ominously that in the new conditions "solidarity" required European Social-Democracy to come to the support (only, it is true, with "intellectual weapons") of all the forces in Russia that stood for "peaceable liquidation" of Soviet power.² Lenin had every justification for calling this pamphlet (which preached complete retreat before capitalism) particularly pernicious: "Such preaching we regard as tantamount to preaching panic flight at the front during war."³

The idea that the Soviet system would evolve toward bourgeois statehood was also expressed in a book *Changing Landmarks* published by Cadets in Prague, and in their journal with the same name (*Smena Vekh*) in Paris. As N. Ustryalov, a former member of the Cadet Party, said, the transition from "direct action" to "an outflanking route" was obviously a sign that "Bolshevism had already changed".⁴ But Lenin did not consider these words and the new threats of the emigrés really dangerous, but the fact that their ideology expressed the mood within Soviet Russia "of thousands and tens of thousands of bourgeois, or of Soviet employees whose function it is to operate our New Economic Policy".⁵

¹ Karl Kautsky, *Von der Demokratie zur Staats-Sklaverei. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Trotzki*, Verlagsgenossenschaft "Freiheit", Berlin, 1921, pp. 5-6, 72, 78-79, 83-84, 102-103, 122-24, 128.

² Otto Bauer, *Der "neue Kurs" in Sowjetrussland*, Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung, Vienna, 1921, pp. 5, 15-16, 20, 22-23, 27, 31, 33-36.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Remarks and Proposals to the Draft Decision for the Comintern Executive Following the Conference of the Three Internationals", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 445.

⁴ M.N. Pokrovsky, "The Repentant Intelligentsia". In *The Communist International*, 1922, No. 20, pp. 5279-5292; E.N. Gorodetsky, *Lenin, Founder of Soviet Historical Science*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 352-53, 364-68 (in Russian).

⁵ V.I. Lenin, "Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 27-April 2, 1922", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 287.

But it was not just a matter of the gloating or attacks of covert or open enemies. Soviet Russia's transition to the NEP (associated with permitting elements of capitalism) and to a peaceful economic coexistence with the capitalist world, gave rise to the anxious question both within the country and in the international labour movement of *whether this policy would not hold back the development of the world revolution?* It was a question that called for a serious, reasoned answer taking into account the deep relationship and interdependence of the *national* and *international* tasks of the Communist movement.

In explaining the new situation Lenin singled out three determining principles.

(1) The very fact of the existence of the Soviet Republic, which was consolidating its economic position, was "a gigantic force and a factor of revolution". "The international situation [now] as regards revolution revolves around Soviet Russia's struggle against the rest of the world, the capitalist countries. To strengthen Soviet Russia and make her invincible—that is what matters most", as it would help further development of the revolutionary struggle both of the workers in advanced countries and oppressed peoples in colonies.¹

Though the principal aim remains the same, there are differences between the policy of a revolutionary party as yet fighting for power, and the same party when it is at the head of a socialist country. The lack of understanding or ignoring this fact is fraught with mistakes.

Georgy Chicherin had already explained this difference in *The Communist International* in October 1919, pointing out in particular that the workers' and peasants' Soviet governments coming to power were faced with *positive aims* in the field of foreign policy, and had faced revolutionary parties and groups in all countries with "the task of fighting for the existence and the strengthening of the international status of the revolutionary Soviet governments". The Comintern's positive programme in the sphere of interstate relations therefore stemmed from its basic revolutionary programme and was oriented primarily on the revolutionary forces' support for the Soviet republics.²

(2) Lenin denied that there was any danger of Soviet Russia's concessions and trade agreements with capitalist countries helping the latter to consolidate their economic position, overcome crises

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, December 22-29, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, pp. 241, 244.

² G.V. Chicherin, "The International Policies of the Two Internationals", *The Communist International*, 1919, No. 6, col. 825, 819-28.

and unemployment, and so postpone the revolution. If the capitalists were really able to prevent crises and unemployment, "capitalism would be everlasting", but the World War and postwar development had shown that they were no more than "blind pawns in the general mechanism"; the crisis of capitalism had become worse throughout the world.¹

(3) The Soviet Republic, Lenin emphasised, always considered it its duty to give assistance and support of every kind to development of the international revolution, primarily through its peace policy, and when necessary by extreme measures (not even excepting military ones in certain conditions). When the Menshevik Fyodor Dan accused him of "advancing a new theory about an impending new period of wars", Lenin replied that it must not be forgotten that "the sword still hangs over us", and that not one of the biggest powers had signed a peace with the Soviet Republic. "If, in the face of these ever actively hostile forces, we pledged ourselves—as we have been advised to do, never to resort to certain actions which from a military-strategical point of view may prove to be aggressive, we would be, not only fools but criminals."²

In October 1921, when some experience of managing the economy under the NEP had already been gained, and it had become clear that new roundabout roads were still needed—that they would have, for example, to learn to trade (which "they did not teach revolutionaries in prisons", as one opponent said)—Lenin described the existing position and attitude to it as follows: "By the spring of 1921 it became evident that we had suffered defeat in our attempt to introduce the socialist principles of production and distribution by 'direct assault', i.e., in the shortest, quickest and most direct way. The political situation in the spring of 1921 revealed to us that on a number of economic issues a retreat to the position of state capitalism, the substitution of 'siege' tactics for 'direct assault', was inevitable.

"If this transition calls forth complaints, lamentations, despondency and indignation among some people, we must say that defeat is not as dangerous as the fear to admit it, fear to draw all the logical conclusions from it. ...That is why we must speak plainly. This is interesting and important not only from the point of view of correct theory, but also from the practical point of view. We cannot learn to solve our problems by new methods today if yesterday's

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, December 22-29, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 243.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, December 22-29, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, pp. 519, 520.

experience has not opened our eyes to the incorrectness of the old methods."¹

However wide the round of tasks covered by the concept "NEP", the central and chief one remained to ensure a stable alliance of the workers and peasants. In the plan for his report to the Ninth All-Russia Congress of Soviets in December 1921 Lenin put it as follows: "We were advancing without sufficient *economic* support by the peasantry; the firmness of the military and political alliance of the workers and peasants was not combined with a corresponding firmness of their economic alliance.

"We are now making a *strategic retreat* that will give us a broader front for attack in the very near future, give us very firm economic *contact* with millions of small peasants and the mass of the peasantry, and will make *our union*, the *union of workers and peasants*, the basis of our whole Soviet Revolution, and our whole Soviet Republic, *invincible*."²

The new economic policy being pursued by Soviet Russia in its peculiar circumstances had a number of unique features. First of all there was its introduction after War Communism, which was what gave it the character of a serious retreat. The new economic policy was being pursued, furthermore, in a country with a vast preponderance of the peasant population, with an extraordinary diversity of conditions in the various regions, and with the existence in many areas of feudal and semi-feudal relations that called for a special approach. Socialism was to be built in a country that was in a hostile capitalist encirclement, under constant threat from international imperialism.

At the same time the NEP exhibited the general patterns of the transition from capitalism to socialism. "This task which we are working on now," Lenin said, "for the time being on our own, seems to be a purely Russian one, but in reality it is a task which all socialists will face. ...The new society, which will be based on the alliance of the workers and peasants, is inevitable. Sooner or later it will come—twenty years earlier or twenty years later—and when we work on the implementation of our New Economic Policy, we are helping to work out for this society the forms of alliance between the workers and peasants."³ In fact the general significance of the NEP was the following: a temporary tolerating of capitalist elements in the economy with their restriction and regulation by a

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Report on the New Economic Policy to the Seventh Moscow Gubernia Conference of the R.C.P.(B.), October 29-31, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 93, 94.

² V.I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 44, 5th Russian Edition, p. 487.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Ninth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, December 23-28, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 177.

proletarian state guided by a revolutionary workers' party, with the existence and maintenance of the commanding heights of the economy in the hands of this state, and with reliance on a stable alliance of the working class with all labouring strata of the people.¹

The experience of the new economic policy is of great significance for developed countries, but is no less important for backward ones with a mixed economy and a preponderance of petty-commodity production and considerable elements of precapitalist relations. The system of transitional measures envisaged in it make it possible to prepare the movement of these nations toward socialism gradually and systematically, allowing for the features of their life and level of consciousness, and flexibly choosing the forms and methods of building socialism.

The new economic policy worked out by Lenin was one of the greatest discoveries in the field of the economic theory of the transition from capitalism to socialism. As B. N. Ponomarev has remarked: "The theory and practice of the NEP played an immense role in preparing the conditions for a developed offensive of socialism along the whole front."²

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND STRUGGLE IN CAPITALIST COUNTRIES

In the situation of "unstable equilibrium" between the two systems contradictory trends were operating in the capitalist world that were evidence of a deepening of the socio-economic crisis and the possibility of an aggravation of class contradictions that would push the workers to rise in a new revolutionary attack; others, on the contrary, indicated that the capitalist class was managing not only to hold its own but even to begin a counter-offensive.

In capitalist countries the passage from war to peace in 1919 and 1920 took place in conditions of a certain economic upswing. The unemployment associated with the demobilisation of millions of soldiers was nearly eliminated, and the "reserve army of labour" was reduced on the whole to the prewar level. Wages, though not keeping pace with the rise in prices of consumer goods, had all the same risen, generating illusions of the advent of a period of capitalist development that would lead to a reduction of the workers' want and an easing of class conflicts.

¹ For fuller details see Yu. A. Polyakov, "NEP: the Road to Socialism". In *The New Economic Policy. Questions of Theory and History*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 14-17 (in Russian).

² *The Great October and the Modern World*, Prague, 1977, p. 15 (in Russian).

But signs had already begun to accumulate in 1920 that the economic boom was no more than temporary. An economic crisis began precisely in those countries where business had boomed during the war and where there had been no destruction, namely in the USA and Japan, and gradually drew Europe into its orbit. Labour productivity was much lower in Europe than before the war, especially because of the wearing out of equipment, and also because of the exhaustion and undernourishment of the workers. The war devastation of European countries increased their need to import food, raw materials, and industrial goods. But as the growth of imports was not compensated by an increase of exports, their adverse balance of trade and indebtedness grew.¹ "The richest countries," Lenin wrote, "are suffocating, being unable to sell their industrial goods because of the depreciating currency."²

The breath of the crisis was first felt in Europe by Great Britain, then by the neutral countries, and later by France and Italy (See Table 4). In the defeated countries production was low, and there was no marked fall in it. But inflation rose steeply in them.

In this situation of incipient crisis, the capitalist class, which had already surmounted a period of certain bewilderment, began to develop a general counterattack on the working class, endeavouring above all to curtail the gains the proletariat had won in the stubborn revolutionary struggle of the first postwar years, or to wipe them out altogether. On the excuse of a need to "rationalise production", they began a campaign against the trade unions, tried to abolish restrictions on the length of the working day, to cut pay, and to intensify exploitation. Employers' stubbornness grew during labour conflicts. The real threat of unemployment was used to put pressure on the workers.

In order to counter the capitalists' offensive, the workers resorted at first to tried methods of struggle (economic and political strikes). In 1920 there was still a growth of strikes, and in the numbers involved, in most of the developed capitalist countries; in many of them that was the year when workers' and employees' strike activity reached its peak. But in the second half of the year a slackening of the strike movement was already noticeable in the USA, Japan, and Canada, and then in France and the Netherlands, which continued in the following years (see Table 5). At the end of 1921 the world economic crisis developed into a depression, but the capitalists were

¹ Eugene Varga, "The World Economy Since the War". In *Ezhegodnik Komintern* (The Comintern Yearbook), Petrograd and Moscow, 1923, pp. 121-23; *The World Economic Crises 1848-1935*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1937, pp. 347-49, 368-69ff. (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at the Fourth All-Russia Congress of Garment Workers, February 6, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 116.

Table 4

Production of Iron and Steel
(in millions of tonnes)

Country	1913		1920		1921		1922		1923	
	Iron	Steel	Iron	Steel	Iron	Steel	Iron	Steel	Iron	Steel
USA	30.6	31.3	36.4	42.1	16.5	19.7	26.8	35.6	40.0	44.9
Great Britain	10.3	7.7	8.0	9.0	2.6	3.7	4.9	5.9	7.4	8.5
France	5.1	4.6	3.4	3.0	3.3	3.0	5.1	4.5	5.3	5.0
Germany	19.0	18.6	5.6	6.6	6.1	8.7	8.0	9.0	4.4	5.9
World	77.2	75.0	58.9	67.1	34.7	42.5	51.9	63.1	66.5	75.1

by no means inclined to relax pressure on the working class. On the contrary, they devoted more and more new efforts to breaking its organisation and intensifying exploitation. There was a marked drop in the percentage of successful strikes. Even the biggest, most stubborn battles ended, as a rule, in defeat of the workers. Given the general ebbing of revolutionary struggle the strike weapon proved less effective than in preceding years.

The development of the economic crisis, the employers' attack on the positions of the working class associated with it, and the proletariat's response, were very uneven in the different countries.

In *Germany* the burden of the crisis was multiplied by the aftermath of the World War and the harsh terms of the Treaty of Versailles. The reduction of area, loss of foreign investments and markets, and huge reparations deliveries and payments weighed heavily on the economy. But the capitalist magnates shifted the main burden onto the working people with the aid of the government. At the end of 1920 real wages were no more than a third of prewar. The level of consumption was lower than before the war: bread and cereals by 44 per cent, meat by 63 per cent, fats by 49 per cent, sugar by 26 per cent. More than half the children were suffering from malnutrition. Industrial production was little more than half that of prewar. At the beginning of 1921 there were 400,000 unemployed, forced to exist on a miserable pittance, while the numbers working less than a full week were over 700,000.

The worst scourge was inflation. The exchange rate of the mark had been 4.2 for a dollar in 1914; in the middle of 1921 it was 76.6 : 1. Inflation was deliberately forced by the monopolists, and exploited by them, primarily to ruin small businesses and increase the concentration and centralisation of capital. Hugo Stinnes and Carl Siemens built up the biggest monopolistic association in the history

Table 5

The Strike Movement in 1919-1923

COUNTRY	1919				1920				1921				1922				1923			
	No. of strikes	Nos. in- volved (000s)	Man-days lost (000s)	No. of strikes	Nos. in- volved (000s)	Man-days lost (000s)	No. of strikes	Nos. in- volved (000s)	Man-days lost (000s)	No. of strikes	Nos. in- volved (000s)	Man-days lost (000s)	No. of strikes	Nos. in- volved (000s)	Man-days lost (000s)	No. of strikes	Nos. in- volved (000s)	Man-days lost (000s)		
Germany	4,932	4,915	47,447	8,682	8,419	52,837	4,871	4,994	26,790	4,924	2,274	24,889	2,035	2,069	14,288					
France	2,026	1,151	15,478	1,832	1,317	23,112	475	402.4	7,027	665	290.3	3,935	1,068	331	4,172					
Italy	1,871	1,555	22,325	2,070	2,314	30,479	1,134	724	8,180	575	448	6,917	201	66	296					
Great Britain	1,352	2,591	34,969	1,607	1,932	26,568	763	1,801	85,872	576	552	19,850	628	405	10,672					
Belgium	366	179	—	506	329	—	252	149	—	169	110	—	164	111	—					
Austria	151	64	221	329	179	927	435	208	1,763	381	211	1,635	268	117	1,074					
Spain	895	178	4,001	1,060	245	7,262	373	84	2,802	487	119	2,673	465	121	3,027					
Netherlands	649	61	1,051	481	66	2,288	299	47	1,370	325	44	1,057	289	56	3,945					
Sweden	440	81	2,296	486	139	8,943	347	49	2,663	392	75	2,175	206	103	6,907					
Czechoslovakia	252	—	—	614	—	—	454	223	250	228	331	3,975	248	209	4,714					
Bulgaria	135	76	—	68	8	—	68	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—					
USA	3,630	4,160	—	3,411	1,460	—	2,385	1,100	—	1,112	1,610	—	1,553	757	—					
Canada	336	149	3,401	322	60	800	168	28	1,049	104	44	1,529	86	34	672					
Japan	2,388	335	—	1,069	127	—	896	171	—	854	86	—	647	69	—					

Sources: Statistisches Handbuch für die Republik Österreich, Vienna, 1921, pp. 112-113; 1928, p. 153; British Labour Statistics. Historical Abstract. 1886-1968, HMSO, London, 1971, p. 396; Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich. 1918-1926, Hobbins, Berlin, 1919-1927; Annuario statistico del lavoro, Rome, 1949, p. 384; Jaarcijfers voor Nederland. 1921-1924, S'Gravenhage, 1923-1925; Historical Statistics of the United States, 1789-1945, Washington, D. C., 1949, p. 73; Annuaire statistique. Cinquante-huitième volume. 1951, Paris, 1952, p. 102; Statistisk Årsbok för Sverige, Stockholm, 1929, p. 227; Year Book of Labour Statistics, Japan, Tokyo, 1959, p. 394; Estadística de las huelgas, Madrid, 1929, pp. x-xi; V. Khadzhinkolov et al., Stachnite borbi na rabotnicheskata klasa v Blgariya, Sofia, 1960, pp. 197, 266, 273.

of Germany, which embraced 1,340 factories, mines, power stations, transport undertakings, and banks. The "Stinnes Empire" employed 600,000 workers; there was justifiable talk of the "Stinnesisation" of Germany. The Thyssen, Krupp, Wolf, and other firms were also prospering. The monopolists used their growing power to rob the working class of its social gains, intensify exploitation, fan chauvinist moods, and discredit "liberals" who tried to pursue a policy of meeting treaty obligations. There was a marked increase in the strength of reactionary nationalist, militarist, and revanchist organisations like the Stahlhelm, Orgesch, etc.¹

As the working class's successful fight against the Kapp Putsch had shown, the offensive of capital could only be held by the concentrated efforts of all proletarians. But their ranks were split. The disputes increased in bitterness, and there was no united action. The big strike battles of the autumn of 1920 in Württemberg, the Rhineland, Lower Silesia, and other industrial centres were short, and usually ended in a compromise. The "Dictator clause" of the Weimar Constitution was used for the first time against strikers, the workers of the Berlin power stations and gasworks. In February 1921 a serious labour dispute matured in the industrial area of Central Germany.

In *Italy* an intensification of the strike struggle accompanied the fall in industrial production and growth of unemployment. There were more strikes in 1920 than in the preceding year. The transport workers waged the most stubborn struggle; after them came the metal workers and then the chemical and textile workers. But the percentage of successful strikes that ended in acceptance of the workers' demands fell from 64 to 54.² The employers adopted an increasingly tough stand. In the middle of August the owners of enterprises in the steel and engineering industries broke their negotiations with the engineering workers' federation (FIOM). In reply the engineering and shipbuilding, and iron and steel workers began a campaign of obstruction (or working to rule) which slowed down work, and demanded exact observance of safety conditions at work. In cases of lockouts, the workers occupied the plants, while not permitting sabotage. This new form of struggle had not long before been tested in separate plants in Piemonte and Naples.³

The industrialists decided on a head-on clash. On 30 August 2,000 Alfa-Romeo workers in Milan were locked out and the works was

¹ *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 3, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1966, pp. 314-16; Wolfgang Ruge, *Deutschland von 1917 bis 1933*, Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, Berlin, 1978, pp. 163, 193.

² *Annuario statistico del lavoro*, Rome, 1949, p. 384.

³ P. Spriano, *L'occupazione delle fabbriche. Settembre 1920*, Edizione Einaudi, Turin, 1964, pp. 31-42.

cordoned off by troops. The Milan district committee of the FIOM called for the occupation of all factories (around 300), which was immediately done. In reply to the National Federation of Industrialists' decision to declare a general lockout in Turin, Genoa and Spezia the workers began everywhere to occupy mills and factories. By September 4 this movement had gripped the towns of the "industrial triangle", Rome, Naples, Florence, Palermo, and other centres. The numbers involved included 400,000 engineering workers, and altogether (counting factories in other industries) around half-a-million.¹

The workers acted with great enthusiasm. Under the leadership of internal commissions, which were converted in many places into factory councils, they restarted work in an organised fashion, and maintained strict discipline and order. The FIAT works in Turin continued to make motor vehicles and other items. The FIAT factory council was chaired by Giovanni Parodi who was close to the L'Ordine Nuovo group. As some of the engineers and technicians did not come to work, the factory council replaced them by volunteers from outside or coming forward from among the workers themselves.

The workers hoped that the occupation of the factories would be the first step to abolishing the capitalists' power. The chairman of the FIAT factory council (they called it a Soviet), addressing the workers, said: "We should not restrict ourselves to the exclamations 'Long live Russia!', we should follow the example of Russian workers and peasants. We must do as they teach us: take power into our hands and retain it, sacrificing ourselves as they do it."²

The workers got together weapons and set up armed squads (a Red Guard) to defend the factories should the authorities risk using force. But the majority, as one of the participants in the events wrote subsequently, still had no clear idea "of how, in practice, to overthrow the government and conquer power for their class".³

The leadership of the Socialist Party displayed bewilderment and indecision. Bordiga's supporters continued to write in general about seizure of power and establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but their paper *Il Soviet* published nothing about the occupation of the factories, and did not put forward a concrete programme of action. The Secretary of the PSI, Egidio Gennari, speaking on September 10 at a meeting of the national council of the CGL, called for spreading the movement throughout the country and turning it

¹ P. Spriano, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-60.

² Cited from P. Secchia, *The Impact of the October Revolution in Italy*, Moscow, 1958, p. 71 (in Russian).

³ Mario Montagnana, *Ricordi di un operaio torinese*, Edizioni Rinascita, Rome, 1952, pp. 135-36.

into a revolution. But he, too, had no idea of how that could be done.¹

The Giolitti government took a stand on "non-intervention". The Prime Minister personally warned the industrialists that they must not count on intervention by the armed forces, because that would only provoke the workers to carry the struggle from the factories into the streets. He pinned great hopes on the conciliatory leaders of the CGL. And he was not mistaken. On September 10 D'Aragona threatened that if the Party itself intended to lead the movement and give it a political, revolutionary character, he and the other trade union leaders would resign. The aim of the struggle should only be recognition of trade union control in factories by the employers, which could lead in the future to "collective control and socialisation". D'Aragona succeeded in pulling the leaders of the FIOM to his side and forcing the leadership of the PSI to capitulate. Even Gennari and Terracini agreed that there was no managing without D'Aragona.²

The CGL and FIOM won a certain rise in wages for the engineering workers through negotiations with the industrialists and government. The former agreed not to resort to measures against the strikers. The government promised to bring in a bill "on workers' control in industry" in Parliament. A referendum of the engineering workers got the agreement of two-thirds for calling off the fight on those terms. At the end of September they ended the occupation of the factories and returned to work. The government did not keep its promise.³

The movement to occupy factories, not being linked with the proletariat's perspective winning of political power, proved, as Luigi Longo put it, "to be only one of the forms of passive resistance". It did not create a real turn in the Italian working class's fight. While "the leadership of the Socialist Party ... only issued fiery words" the right-wing union leaders disrupted the labour organisations by their deeds. Luigi Longo summed it up as follows: "Thus the occupation of the factories, with the immense potential for a fighting attack the movement had, and its miserable conclusion, faced everyone once again and more forcibly with the urgency of a new revolutionary organisation of the proletariat, i.e. of a new party."⁴

In France the crisis caused a marked fall in business activity, although it was weakened to some extent by the work of rebuilding the war-damaged areas, delay in demobilisation, and reconversion

¹ M. and M. Ferrara, *Talks with Togliatti*, Moscow, 1954, pp. 63-64 (in Russian).

² P. Spriano, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-102; G. Candeloro, *Il movimento sindacale in Italia*, pp. 111-12.

³ P. Spriano, *op. cit.*, p. 54; G. Candeloro, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-12.

⁴ Luigi Longo-Carlo Salinari, *Tra reazione e rivoluzione*, p. 84.

of war industry. The general production index, which stood at 66 per cent of prewar in 1920, sank to 55 per cent in 1921. The fuel shortage and lack of raw materials became particularly acute. Industries working for export, and marine transport, experienced big difficulties. Unemployment affected workers in the furniture, footwear, and clothing trades. Inflation weighed heavily on the workers and petty-bourgeoisie.

The workers continued the economic struggle, but its conditions became more and more difficult. At the end of 1920 there was a strike of 5,500 workers in the porcelain works in Limoges, which lasted eight weeks; it ended in only a miserable bonus for workers with large families. Chemical workers also struck in Marseilles, steel workers in Boucau, papermakers in Saint-Girons. In 1921 the number of strikes fell off; they seldom won the workers anything. Even the stubborn three-months' strike of 100,000 textile workers in the Nord Department in the spring of 1921, in protest against stopping of the cost of living bonus, was not successful. The textile workers struck again in September, and in October the building workers of Paris. Many workers, disappointed by the failures, began to quit the unions. After 1921 the CGT lost 62 per cent of its membership. Not more than 1,500,000 members remained in all the union organisations; 85 per cent of the workers were unorganised.¹

In *Great Britain* the economic crisis hit the coal, shipbuilding, steel, and textile industries particularly hard. The volume of foreign trade fell substantially. By the summer of 1921 there were more than two million unemployed, while another million were working a short week.² The employers imposed a general reduction of wages; in 1921 the wages of 7,200,000 workers were cut, and in 1922 those of another 7,600,000. Over the two years real wages fell by 16 per cent.³

Through the fault of the leaders of the unions and Labour Party, the working class proved unprepared to repulse the attack launched by the capitalists. The miners were the only large section who put up a stubborn resistance to capital's encroachments on their standard of living. On 31 March 1921 the temporary wage agreement between the Miners' Federation and the coalowners expired. The owners were determined to use this for a steep reduction of the miners' pay. As from that day the government, for its part, decided to end the government control over the coal industry imposed during the war. Encouraged by the government's support the mineowners declared a general

¹ Jean Bruhat, Marc Piolot, *Esquisse d'une histoire de la C.G.T. (1895-1965)*, CGT, Paris, 1966, pp. 91-92, 105; *Histoire du Parti communiste français (manuel)*, Editions sociales, Paris, 1964, pp. 117-18.

² See P.V. Gurovich, *The Upswing of the Labour Movement in Britain in 1918-1921*, Moscow, 1956, pp. 167-69, 171 (in Russian).

³ *Eighteenth Abstract of Labour Statistics*, HMSO, London, 1927, p. 121.

lockout on April 1, depriving more than a million miners of work. The authorities immediately declared a state of emergency; the police and army were alerted, reservists were called up, a volunteer "Defence Force" was set up, and troops were moved into the coalfields.

In reply to these measures by the government and coalowners the Miners' Federation appealed to the other members of the Triple Alliance (the transport workers and the railwaymen) to declare a joint strike. Their leaders promised to begin a solidarity strike on 15 April 1921, but went back on their word. The workers called that day "Black Friday". The miners' struggle was supported only by the Communist Party of Great Britain, whose slogan was "Solidarity with the Miners". By its activity it won a certain support in the miners' union; the South Wales Miners' Federation affiliated to Profinern.¹ Although the miners continued the struggle for another two months, they were forced to give in and accept the harsh conditions proposed by the mineowners.² This defeat of the biggest and most militant section of the working class cleared the way for an employers' attack on the pay and conditions of other workers, who, demoralised by their leaders' opportunist policy, were in no state to put up a real resistance.

In the USA the crisis began in 1920 with a cutback of production and a drop in the volume of foreign trade. There was also a growth of unemployment in connection with the demobilisation of two million soldiers from the army. In 1921 the number of the unemployed reached the unprecedentedly high level of 11.7 per cent of the total gainfully employed labour force. Many firms went bankrupt. Industrial production fell. Real wages decreased considerably. The crisis also hit agriculture, ruining many farmers and increasing the exodus of people to the city.³

In these conditions the monopolies developed an offensive against the working class; employers cut wages in some cases by 30 to 45 per cent on 1920.⁴ The biggest sections of the working class, above all the miners and the railwaymen, responded with organised resistance. The strikes had a mainly defensive character, and took place in many

¹ L.J. Macfarlane, *The British Communist Party. Its Origin and Development until 1929*, MacGibbon and Kee, London, 1966, p. 130.

² See Allen Hutt, *Post-War History of the British Working Class*, Victor Gollancz, London, 1937, pp. 58-61.

³ William Z. Foster, *Outline Political History of the Americas*, International Publishers, New York, 1951, p. 363; *History of the Labor in the United States. 1896-1932*, Vol. 3-4, New York, 1953, p. 67; *Historical Statistics of the United States from Colonial Times to 1970*, Vol. 1, US Govt. Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1975, p. 135.

⁴ *History of the Labour Movement in the USA in Recent Times*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1970, p. 75 (in Russian).

cases in spite of government bans and trade union leaders' decisions. In September 1920, for instance, 140,000 anthracite miners, dissatisfied by the arbitration court's pay award, went on strike, but were forced to give in after three weeks. A strike of brown coal miners in Alabama against the principle of the "open shop" involved 20,000 men;¹ it lasted half-a-year and ended with an arbitration court decision in favour of the employers.²

The economic crisis hit the *Scandinavian countries* hard. Exports of timber and iron ore from Sweden fell. Only 20 blast furnaces out of 134 were working. The value of Swedish exports fell by two-thirds in 1921, and of imports by one-third. Employers began to break collective agreements and demanded reductions of pay of 20 to 30 per cent. Unemployment rose steeply. Whereas 2 per cent of the members of trade unions had no work in September 1920, nearly 40 per cent were without jobs at the beginning of 1922.³

The position of those employed on public works was particularly hard. In Denmark unemployment among insured workers increased from 6 to 19 per cent.⁴

In Norway, where there had been the biggest number of bankruptcies, the employers decided in the spring of 1921 to do battle with the workers, although most wage agreements only expired the next year. The shipowners demanded an immediate reduction of seamen's pay by 33 per cent. After fruitless negotiations the seamen called a strike on 8 May 1921. The Norwegian federation of trade unions called on the portworkers to strike in sympathy with the seamen from May 15, and on May 26 called a general strike that involved 120,000 workers, almost the whole of the proletariat. The government mobilised troops, and threw them and police against the workers. Armed clashes occurred. The general strike lasted until June 6, the strikes of the seamen and portworkers until June 30. The fight ended in a compromise; pay was cut by 17 per cent.⁵ By the spring of 1922 employees' pay had been reduced on the whole by 25 to 30 per cent.⁶

The capitalists of *Yugoslavia* having noted symptoms of stagnation and weakening in the labour movement at the beginning of 1920, passed to the offensive and struck the workers heavy blows. A number of strikes failed; employers resorted to lockouts, and ignored wage

¹ The "open shop" system exploited by the employers excluded any union interference in labour relations and envisaged refusal of trade union recognition and collective bargaining.

² See *Ezhegodnik Komintern*, p. 88.

³ J. Segall, *The Labour Movement in Scandinavian Countries. Sweden, Denmark, and Norway*, Moscow, 1927, pp. 60-62 (in Russian).

⁴ A.S. Kan, *A History of the Scandinavian Countries*, Moscow, 1980, p. 178 (in Russian).

⁵ J. Segall, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

⁶ *Norges kommunistiske partis historie*, Vol. I, Oslo, 1963, p. 124.

agreements. In the second half of April the authorities succeeded in breaking the general railway strike that started on April 16, which proved a serious defeat for the working class.

Unrest affected all sectors of the economy in *Romania* in 1920. The miners of the Jiu Valley, the railwaymen and port workers, steel workers, post office employees, and Bucharest printers struck work. In October the country was hit by a general political strike. The leaders of the Socialist Party of Romania (PCR) and the General Confederation of Labour, forced to take account of the sentiments of the masses, demanded that the government observe democratic freedoms, recognise labour organisations, withdraw troops from factories, rescind the state of emergency, repeal the law on settling labour disputes, end terror against workers, and give dismissed workers back their jobs. When these demands were refused, the railway workers began a strike, which became a general one on October 20, in which almost the whole working class—around 400,000 men—took part. The strike paralysed industry, transport, and communications. The right-wing leaders, however, conspired with the authorities and called the struggle off on October 28. Many left-wing leaders of the PCR and trade unions were arrested. Repression was intensified after the breaking of the strike. The employers soon took the offensive, lengthened the working day, carried out mass sackings, and cancelled collective bargains. The working class was forced to retreat.¹

CONSOLIDATION OF COMMUNIST PARTIES

With the economic crisis and capitalists' offensive the process of internal differentiation within several of the biggest Socialist parties led by centrist leaders, especially in Germany, France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Switzerland, entered a decisive stage. In others the formation of communist parties was completed. Both these trends created the necessary conditions (as the Second Congress of the Comintern noted) for consolidation of the communist movement on both a national and an international scale.

In *Germany* the left wing of the Independent Social-Democratic Party (USPD) developed intensive agitation for merging with the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) and joining the Comintern. The Communists actively encouraged them in this. Clara Zetkin wrote a series of articles in *Die Rote Fahne* under the title "The Road to Moscow". The Extraordinary Congress of the USPD held on 12-17 Oc-

¹ T. Georgescu, *De la greva generală la crearea PCR*, Bucharest, 1962, pp. 16-17.

tober 1920 in Halle was attended by a delegation from the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI). At the same time Germany was visited for the first time since the Revolution by a delegation of Soviet trade unionists. After the sharp discussion that developed at the Congress of the USPD, 237 delegates voted for joining the Comintern, 156 opposed, with two abstentions. While the left wing sang *The Internationale* the right wing at the call of Arthur Crispian quit the hall, held a separate session, and split the Party.¹

Representatives of the KPD and USPD (Lefts) soon created a provisional joint leadership, and the uniting of local groups began. It was mainly the branches of the USPD consisting of workers that united with the KPD. The Hamburg branch, in which Ernst Thälmann had been a leader for many years, joined the KPD almost en bloc, together with their paper *Hamburger Volks-Zeitung*.² The party functionaries and most of members of the Reichstag (67 out of 84) stayed in the USPD, which also retained almost all the party newspapers and printing works, and the party treasury. In spite of that it did not long remain independent. It lost supporters, and its leaders were drawn to the bosom of the "old" Social-Democracy.

Consolidation of the left forces was completed on 4-7 December 1920 at the Unity Congress in Berlin, at which 349 delegates from the USPD (Lefts) and 136 delegates from the KPD unanimously decided to found a United Communist Party of Germany (VKPD), adopted a Manifesto, and passed resolutions on work in the trade unions and among the youth. The agrarian programme for the first time envisaged partial break-up of the landed estates, which opened the way for establishing an alliance of the working class and the labouring peasantry.

The founding of the VKPD was an important step toward making it a mass party; it now had 300,000 members (200,000 of whom had belonged to the USPD). Ernst F. Däumig and Paul Levi were elected co-chairmen. The Party was joined by such experienced labour leaders as Ernst Thälmann, Walter Stoecker, Wilhelm Florin, Wilhelm Koenen, Franz Dahlem, and Robert E. Eichhorn.³ There were also some who had not overcome the pull of Social-Democracy; and leftist moods remained strong. In spite of all their efforts they did not succeed in drawing all the "left" Communist Labour Party into the united party. It soon expelled the most outspoken opponents of Bolshevism, like Heinrich Laufenberg and Fritz Wolffheim, but

¹ USPD. *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des ausserordentlichen Parteitages in Halle vom 12. bis 17. Oktober 1920*, Berlin, 1920.

² See Ernst Thälmann. *Eine Biographie*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1979, p. 105.

³ *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 3, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1966, pp. 306-11.

held to its old stand, dissipated its forces on internal strife, and lost influence more and more.

The discussion in the Socialist Party became very acute in *France* after the return of its delegates from the Second Congress of the Comintern. Their speeches at mass meetings in Paris and other cities aroused great enthusiasm among supporters of joining the Communist International.¹

The Third International Committee, which was led by Marcel Cachin and Paul Vaillant-Couturier, which united the left wing of the SFIO (Socialist Party), developed a campaign of agitation through the *Revue communiste* and *Bulletin communiste*, among other papers. The Ex-servicemen's Republican Association (ARAC) and Henri Barbusse's Clarté group, and the revolutionary syndicalists led by Gaston Monmousseau and Pierre Sémard, who were grouped around the paper *La Vie ouvrière*, did great work. The Union of Socialist Youth voted to join the Comintern at its congress on 30 October 1920, and renamed itself the Young Communist League. In November the left forces gained impressive victories at the congresses of most of the Party's federations.²

At the same time the right-wing leaders of the SFIO, Albert Thomas and Marcel Sembat, who had set up a Committee of Socialist Resistance together with right reconstructionists led by Léon Blum, stepped up their attacks on the Comintern. Blum declared that Moscow's "new ideas" contradicted "traditional socialism". The centrists Jean Longuet and Paul Faure came out for joining the Comintern only from fear of losing the support of socialist workers. Their constant manoeuvres carried them further and further to the right.

The decisive struggle developed at the 18th Congress of the SFIO in Tours on 25-30 December 1920.³ The right wing and centrists tried their utmost to postpone the Party's joining of the Comintern. Blum attacked the policy and ideology of the Comintern, rejected Lenin's idea of revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat, the principles of the proletarian party's relations with trade unions, and form of party organisation, and in general, all the theoretical and "emotional aspect of communist theory". Longuet sought to be the "arbitrator", but resorted to a direct lie about the Comintern in his speech.⁴ Some speakers who wanted to join the Comintern at the same time opposed a break with the centrists.

¹ Jean Fréville, *La nuit finit à Tours*, Editions sociales, Paris, 1951, pp. 106-108.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 109-12.

³ For further details see Z.V. Chernukha, *The Founding of the French Communist Party*, Moscow, 1976, pp. 86-102 (in Russian).

⁴ For further details see S.S. Salychev, *The French Socialist Party in the Period between the Two World Wars. 1921-1940*, Moscow, 1973, pp. 21-27 (in Russian).

The speech of the representative of the Communist International, Clara Zetkin, who had entered France illegally, made a big impression on the delegates. She said that she was ashamed of the workers of France, Germany, and Great Britain for not having yet done their revolutionary duty by the Russian proletariat. "The unity of the Party," about which many speak, she said, "is not a fortress ... it is a building in ruins ... where the Right seek to stifle the Left and the Left seek to tie down the Right."¹ The delegate from Indochina, Nguyen Ai Quac (subsequently the organiser of the Communist Party of Indochina and President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh), spoke in favour of joining the Third International. He called on French Socialists to take active steps to defend the oppressed population of the colonies.² Supporters of the Third International won an impressive victory at the congress. Their resolution got 3,208 votes, and the Longuetists 1,022. The number who abstained, were absent or voted for other resolutions was 533. Delegates with nearly 70 per cent of the votes therefore supported joining the Comintern.³ The centrists and the right-wing then quit the congress, splitting the Party. "The Tours Congress," the Manifesto adopted by it said, "will mark a historic date in the long and already glorious life of socialism in France", and stressed that "the fight will continue, more intense and broader. It is no longer a matter of riots and adventures" but of serious preparation for decisive battles with the enemy.⁴

That fact that the party of the revolutionary proletariat in France (it soon began to be called the Communist Party) was founded by a majority of the former Socialist Party gave it many advantages. From its birth it was a mass party, with more than 130,000 members (while around 30,000 followed the socialist leaders), and could count with full justification on inheriting the revolutionary socialist traditions. While drawing "a line of demarcation between reformism and communism", however, the Party did not immediately know how to rid itself of the faults it inherited from the past, and to carry through a full revision of its policy, methods, and organisation.⁵ Right-wing and anarchosyndicalist groups operated within its ranks and weakened its unity.

¹ *Parti socialiste. Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière. 18-e Congrès National tenue à Tours les 25-30 Décembre 1920* (Verbatim Report), Paris, 1921, pp. 371-76.

² Jean Fréville, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-21.

³ *SFIO, op. cit.*, pp. 478, 563-95.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 559-61.

⁵ *Histoire du Parti communiste français*, pp. 97-103; *The Communist International in Documents. 1919-1932*, Moscow, 1933, pp. 276-78; *Fighting for the Interests of the Working People of France. Fifty Years of the Communist Party of France*, Moscow, 1971, p. 17 (both in Russian).

The internal battle in the *Italian Socialist Party* became sharper during discussion of the results of the occupation of factories. There were three separate groups within the Party. In October 1920 the reformists held a separate conference in Reggio Emilia, called themselves the Socialist Concentration Fraction, and adopted a stand hostile to the Comintern. Members of the left currents—the Bordiga and l'Ordine Nuovo groups, the Left Maximalists, and the Federation of Socialist Youth—called themselves the Communist Fraction, and at their conference in Imola on 28-29 November 1920 demanded the expulsion of reformists and a change in the Party's name. The Centrist-Maximalists, led by Serrati, called themselves the Unitarian Socialist-Communist Fraction at a conference in Florence, and as before refused to break with reformists.¹ A majority of the Party, as the pre-congress discussion indicated, supported Serrati's conciliatory line.

At the PSI's 17th Congress, which opened in Livorno on 15 January 1921, each fraction moved its own resolution on the main issue, viz., the line of the Party and its attitude to the International. In the course of the debate the supporters of all fractions affirmed that they adhered to the Comintern, but it became clear that a split was inevitable. Bordiga and Terracini stressed the need to separate Communists from reformists. Gennari's group merged with the Communists, Lazzari's with the "Unitarians". Hopes that Serrati would prefer an alliance with the Communists to agreement with the reformists, and that the Italian Congress would go like the ones in Halle and Tours, were not realised. The results of the card vote became known on January 21: the centrists' resolution received 98,000 votes, the Communists' 58,000, the reformists' 14,000. The members of the Communist Fraction then quit the Goldoni Theatre, where the congress was being held, and marched, singing *the Internationale* to the San Marco Theatre, where they proclaimed the founding of the Communist Party of Italy, and adopted its rules. Bordiga, Gennari, Gramsci, and Terracini were among those elected to the Central Committee.²

The founding of the Italian Communist Party, which oriented the working class on vigorous revolutionary actions, and was faithful to the principles of proletarian internationalism, was the natural result of the whole preceding development. More than a third of the members of the old Socialist Party, (and, moreover, its most active, proletarian part) joined the Communist Party. The Federation of Socialist Youth (40,000 strong), which held its congress a week later

¹ *Forty Years of the Communist Party of Italy*, Moscow, 1961, pp. 64-66 (in Russian); D.E. Kunina, "The Third Congress of the Comintern and the Communist Party of Italy". In: *The Third Congress of the Comintern*, pp. 402-407.

² Spriano, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85, 110, 115-17.

in Fiesole, declared its support for the Communist Party, and changed its name to the Federation of Communist Youth.¹ As for the PSI, after the departure of the Communists, its congress also confirmed its adhesion to the Comintern but, as soon became clear, this was simply a declaration meant to pacify those maximalists who considered it necessary to continue the revolutionary struggle.

In *Great Britain* the disagreements among left Socialist organisations had to be overcome in order to form a Communist Party. Lenin's counsel and advice played a big role in that. In a letter to the Joint Provisional Committee preparing the Unity Convention he wrote that he was in complete sympathy with the "plans for the immediate organisation of a single Communist Party of Britain.... Personally I am in favour of participation in Parliament and of affiliation to the Labour Party, given wholly free and independent communist activities."²

This letter was read out to the delegates at the opening of the Communist Unity Convention in London on 31 July 1920, in which 152 delegates took part, with 211 mandates, representing 56 branches of the British Socialist Party, 22 Communist Unity Groups (formed by members of the Socialist Labour Party who disagreed with its leadership's refusal to take part in the creation of the Communist Party), and more than other 20 small organisations and groups. The convention unanimously passed a resolution setting up the Communist Party of Great Britain, and affiliating it with the Comintern. After a direct debate, the resolution on parliamentary action, moved by Tom Bell, received 186 votes against 19 on a card vote: "the Communist Party", it said, "repudiates the reformist view that a social revolution can be achieved by the ordinary methods of parliamentary democracy, but regards parliamentary and electoral action generally as providing a valuable means of propaganda and agitation towards the revolution." The balance of forces was rather different in the discussion on affiliation to the Labour Party; 100 votes were cast for affiliation, and 85 against.³ Lenin's advice, the chairman of the CPGB, Arthur MacManus, wrote subsequently, was the final argument in favour of affiliating to the Labour Party.⁴

The uniting of the revolutionary organisations in Great Britain was completed in the first half of 1921. The Leeds Unity Convention (II) held on 29-30 January 1921 united the following in the Commu-

¹ See Luigi Longo-Carlo Salinari, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-107; see also *The Militant Vanguard of the Working People of Italy. Fifty Years of the Communist Party of Italy*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 42, 55, 100-101 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "Reply to a Letter from the Joint Provisional Committee for the Communist Party of Britain", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 202.

³ *Communist Unity Convention. Official Report*, CPGB, London, 1920, pp. 9, 57, 72.

⁴ *Izvestia VTsIK*, 30 August 1923.

nist Party of Great Britain: the Workers' Socialist Federation, the Communist Labour Party (founded in Scotland in the autumn of 1920), and a number of small independent communist groups. In April 1921, after the Independent Labour Party's rejection of affiliation to the Communist International, several hundred of its revolutionary-minded members joined the Communist Party.¹

The formation of the Communist Party of Great Britain was an important stage in the development of the British labour movement. But the Party was small in numbers; in the early 1920s it did not have more than 2,500 members, working apart from the organised labour movement. The Party was faced with the difficult task of strengthening its links with the masses of the workers.²

In *Switzerland* the left wing's long fight to get the Social-Democratic Party to join the Comintern was unsuccessful. At an Extraordinary Congress of the SPS in Berne on 10-12 December 1920, when the right wing and centrists rejected a motion to join the Communist International (by 350 votes to 213) the Left demonstratively walked out. On 5-6 March 1921 they held a founding congress of the Communist Party of Switzerland in Zurich. In addition to 145 delegates representing 5,483 former members of the SPS, 28 representatives of 873 members of communist groups (Old Communists) took part. In spite of unresolved disagreements on tactics, the congress unanimously decided to found the Communist Party of Switzerland and to join the Comintern. Franz Welti was elected chairman of the Central Committee, and Fritz Platten secretary.³

The nucleus of the Communist Party in *Spain* was the Federation of Socialist Youth, and not the Socialist Party. The Federation, convinced that the Executive Committee of the Socialist Labour Party was wavering between the Second and Third Internationals, decided to affiliate to the Comintern in December 1919. On 15 April 1920, at its congress in Madrid, it proclaimed itself the Spanish Communist Party. In a manifesto to the proletariat of Spain it said that the Communist International was the sole centre of the international working men's organisation and that it was necessary to agitate for social revolution and not partial reforms. It also recognised the dictatorship of the proletariat as the sole means of passing to communism, and the Soviet Government of Russia as the model of such power.⁴

¹ James Klugmann, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 67-69.

² I.N. Undasynov, *Communists and the Labour Party. 1919-1923*, Moscow, 1979, pp. 76-91 (in Russian).

³ Heinz Egger, *Die Entstehung der Kommunistischen Partei und der Kommunistischen Jugendverbandes der Schweiz*, Genossenschaft Literaturvertrieb, Zurich, 1952, pp. 215-22; Marino Bodenmann, *Zum 40. Jahrestag der Gründung der Kommunistischen Partei der Schweiz*, Verlag der Partei der Arbeit der Schweiz, Zurich, 1961, pp. 24-25.

⁴ *The Communist International*, 1920, No. 10.

An internal struggle developed inside the Executive Committee of the Socialist Labour Party. In June 1920 it declared its provisional adhesion to the Comintern, but in April 1921 only 6,025 votes were cast at its Third Extraordinary Congress for joining the Third International, with 8,808 against.¹ The Left Socialists, including Antonio García Quejido, Daniel Anguiano, and Nuñez de Arena, withdrew from the congress, and founded the Spanish Communist Labour Party on 13 April 1921. In November 1921 the two communist parties united at a conference in Madrid, but that did not lead immediately to their organic merger; there was a certain estrangement for a long time between the "young people" of the PCE and the "adults" of the PSOE. The "youth" accused the "adults" of opportunism and centrism, while the latter accused the "youth" of sectarianism and leftism. This complicated development of the party's work among the masses.²

In *Belgium* the Flemish and Walloon communist groups that arose in 1919-1920 founded a Belgian Communist Party at the end of 1920, which published a newspaper *Ouvrier communiste* and carried on propaganda. An organisation calling itself Friends of the Exploited, led by a prominent internationalist Socialist Joseph Jacquemotte, was active within the reformist Belgian Labour Party, and rallied around the left weekly *Exploité*. It was expelled from the BLP for its vigorous opposition to the opportunist line of the leadership and for supporting the Third International; in May 1921 it decided to found a Communist Party. Both communist parties merged at a congress held in Brussels on 3-4 September 1921 as the Communist Party of Belgium, which immediately joined the Comintern³.

In *Greece* the Socialist Labour Party founded in 1918 decided the following year to withdraw from the Second International and to get ready to join the Third International. In order to establish contact D. Ligdopoulos was sent to Moscow. At the Party's Second Congress in Athens in April 1920 heated disputes arose between the Lefts and right-centrists. The Lefts came out on top, and it was decided to join the Comintern. The Party assumed the name Socialist Labour Party (Communists) of Greece. It stressed the principle of internationalism in its resolutions, and took an active part in the anti-war campaign in connection with the Graeco-Turkish war.⁴

¹ Manuel Tuñón de Lara, *La España del Siglo XX, 1914-1939*, Librería Española, Paris, 1973, pp. 95-96.

² S. Pozharskaya, "The Communist Party of Spain at the Crossroads". In *Problems of the Working-Class and Anti-Fascist Movement in Spain*, Moscow, 1960, p. 115 (in Russian).

³ J. Jacquemotte, *Articles et interpellations parlementaires 1912-1936*, Brussels, 1961; Yu.N. Pankov, *Modern Belgium*, Moscow, 1963 (in Russian).

⁴ G. D. Kiriakidis, "From the History of the Founding of the Communist Party of Greece". In *Lenin and the Founding of Communist Parties in the Countries of Central and Southeast Europe*, Moscow, 1973, pp. 447-54 (in Russian).

In Czechoslovakia the Marxist Left, led by Bohumir Šmeral, tried to rally all the revolutionary elements. The first issue of *Rudé právo* came out on 21 September 1920. At the 13th Congress of the Czechoslovak Social-Democratic Labour Party in Prague on 25 September 1920, which was boycotted by the right wing, it was decided to found an independent party, the CSDLP (Lefts), which was joined by a majority of the Social-Democratic branches that had adopted a revolutionary orientation. The Lefts soon won over the Czech, Slovak, German, and Hungarian Socialist Youth leagues, which began to prepare for the founding of a united Young Communist League of Czechoslovakia.

When the coalition government of the Social-Democrat Vlastimil Tusar was replaced by Černý's government of "officials", however, and the capitalists developed an open attack on the working class, the right-wing leaders of Social-Democracy completed the splitting of the Party. At the end of November 1920 they held their own special 13th Congress of the CSDLP, and in December decided to seize the People's House in Prague from the Lefts, with the help of the police. Around a million Czech, Slovak, German, Hungarian, and Ukrainian workers responded to the Lefts' call for a general protest strike.¹ The strikers not only demanded return of the People's House but also called for the resignation of the bourgeois government and establishment of workers' control in factories and on big landed estates. In some areas (Kladno, Oslavany, Hodonin, Vrutky) the strike began to grow into an armed struggle for power. The government suppressed the movement by military force.²

The December strike ended the revolutionary upsurge in Czechoslovakia. The working class's defeat proved the consolidation of the capitalists' political domination, supported by right-wing Social-Democracy. The masses were taught a hard lesson; the revolutionary vanguard concluded that it was necessary to rally the left wing ideologically and organisationally. The founding of a Communist Party became the main, immediate task. On 15 May 1921, at the 14th Congress of the CSDLP (Lefts), which became the founding congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the Party was converted into a Communist Party, and it was decided to join the Communist International.

The founding of the Party was completed at a Unity Congress in Smichov (30 October-4 November 1921): the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia merged with the German Section of the CPC (led by

¹ *Průhled dějin KSČ*, Prague, 1976, p. 99.

² A.Kh. Klevansky, "Lenin in the Fight to Found the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia". In *Lenin and the Founding of Communist Parties in the Countries of Central and Southeast Europe*, pp. 162-63.

Karel Krejbich, and formed in March 1921 from the left wing of the (German Social-Democratic Party), and several other communist groups. All the national communist organisations of the republic were united in a single party. A mass party thus arose that inherited the best militant traditions of the labour movement, and was able to head the working-class struggle and unite all working people around it.¹

In *Romania* the main lesson learned by the working class from the experience of the 1920 general strike was the need to found its own revolutionary party. The visit of Romanian Socialists to Soviet Russia in November 1920, where they were received by Lenin, was most important in deciding this.

The founding Congress of the Communist Party of Romania (First Congress of the PCR) was held in Bucharest on 8-12 May 1921. It decided by an overwhelming majority on unconditional adhesion to the Third International; it was unable, however, to complete its work, for the police surrounded the building and arrested the delegates.² Publication of the newspaper *Socializmul* was only revived at the end of the year. Later the Programme of the PCR said that the founding of the Party on a basis of Marxist-Leninist ideology "meant a new, higher stage—both ideologically and politically and organisationally—in the revolutionary movement of Romania, and in growth of the advanced section of the working class, and gave a powerful new impetus to the political and social battles of the broad masses of our country."³

In *Yugoslavia* the Socialist Labour Party (Communists) was renamed the Communist Party of Yugoslavia at its Second Congress in June 1920. The new programme gave evidence of its break with Social-Democratic ideology and was a victory for the revolutionary trend. In the summer of 1920 the party had successes in the local elections in Serbia and Macedonia, and in November won 59 seats (out of 419) in the elections for the Constituent Assembly, becoming the third biggest group. The alarmed government decided to smash the party. On 30 December it was accused of plotting a coup d'état; the government, declaring that the party was guided by the "Russian Bolshevik example", banned its propaganda, and that of the revolutionary trade unions and communist youth, and also strikes and demonstrations. Mass arrests and persecution began; a regime of terror and police

¹ F.I. Firsov, "Lenin, the Comintern, and the Formation of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia". In *The Third Congress of the Comintern...*, pp. 393-96.

² T. Georgescu, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

³ *Programme of the Romanian Communist Party of the Building of a Comprehensively Developed Socialist Society and Romania's Movement to Communism*, Bucharest, 1975, pp. 37-38.

violence was instituted and more than 10,000 persons were jailed.¹

The forming of communist parties, integrally linked with the ideological and organisational demarcation of proletarian revolutionaries from reformists of a right-wing and centrist hue, was due to the objective need of the labour movement. Communist parties were by no means founded "on orders from Moscow", as the slanderers still claim, and were not a "foreign body" in their countries, but grew organically from the national soil over a more or less lengthy period. Apart from its common features the course of this process also bore the stamp of the special tangle of concrete historical circumstances existing in each country. One can distinguish several main types of formation and consolidation of communist parties, in which certain characteristic common features are very clearly manifested.

(1) In countries where there was a revolution (Finland, Germany, Hungary), the situation itself accelerated the birth of Communist parties. They were founded by the separation of the left wing from Social-Democratic parties, and its uniting with left radical groups standing aloof from reformist organisations. They were usually also joined by groups of internationalists returning from Soviet Russia, where they had taken part in the revolutionary struggle. These communist parties usually included some of the advanced workers immediately, and enjoyed influence among the masses. But considerable circles of revolutionary workers remained, in Germany, for example, in the centrist Independent Social-Democratic Party, so that one of the Communists' main jobs was to unite with them in a single Communist Party. Too hasty a merging of a newly founded Communist Party with the Social-Democratic Party, however, as happened in Hungary, served as a warning against the danger of the Communists' being diluted in the old reformist organisation. In Austria, where the Communist Party was founded without preparing a mass basis, the political manoeuvring of the Austro-Marxists prevented differentiation of the left elements within Social-Democracy.

(2) In another group of countries, the stand of the Left Social-Democratic Parties came closer and closer to that of the Communists, and the Lefts enjoyed growing influence in the working class. In Bulgaria, for example, and to some extent in Yugoslavia and Argentina, the revolutionary Social-Democratic parties, consolidating themselves on the principles proclaimed by the Comintern, gradually became communist parties. This road, which was not accompanied with a split in the old organisation, but only with a purging from it of elements that did not want to accept the communist platform,

¹ G.M. Slavin, M.M. Sumarokova, "Lenin and the Labour Movement in Yugoslavia (1904-1924)". In *Lenin and the Founding of Communist Parties in the Countries of Central and Southeast Europe*, pp. 423-24 (in Russian).

enabled these parties to become an influential force immediately, based on the best traditions and a solid organisation. The Comintern helped them to rid themselves of survivals of centrism and to fully assimilate communist principles.

(3) In Czechoslovakia, France, Italy, and certain other countries, the forming of communist parties took a road of a far-reaching transformation of previously quite strong Socialist and Social-Democratic Parties into communist ones through a split with the opportunist wing. Lenin pointed out the immense difficulties of this process, which entailed the need to overcome Social-Democratic and centrist traditions both in the ideological and political sphere and in organisational matters, and methods of activity and struggle for the masses. Lenin and the Comintern paid close attention to this process and constantly encouraged it. In separate countries (Czechoslovakia, Norway) the Left Socialists succeeded in switching almost the whole party onto communist lines without much loss. The new parties understandably also inherited elements that did not want to break with Social-Democracy. In those cases it was inevitable that whole groups of reformists and centrists later left them.

(4) In several countries (Brazil, Spain, etc.) the nucleus of the new party was communist groups plus revolutionary syndicalists, so that the communist parties were largely based on the traditions of the latter, while left elements of the old Social-Democratic parties played a small role.

(5) Finally, in the group of countries where mass reformist parties had been able to maintain an influential position, communist parties were formed through the uniting of several revolutionary groups or small left parties. In those cases (as in Great Britain), they did not succeed in making any sort of serious inroads into the influence of the old reformist or centrist party, or to promote an internal demarcation within its organisations. It was particularly important for the communist parties in those countries, and at the same time extremely difficult, to overcome their isolation and to find ways and means of establishing firm links with the organised workers.

Whatever the roads of building communist parties, and whatever the difficulties they had to contend with, the very fact of their formation and consolidation was a very important turning-point in the development of the international labour movement. Taking up class battles were parties that stood on a platform of scientific communism, that boldly took on the function of organiser and leader of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat and all working people. They had still to perfect their strategy, theory, and organisation, so as to become real parties of the new, Leninist type, but their formation had already altered the face of the labour movement, breached the positions of social-reformism and other opportunist trends, and ended Social-

Democracy's monopoly position forever in both the ideological and political and organisational spheres. A qualitatively new balance of power was built up between the different trends in the labour movement.

THE FIGHT AGAINST THE "LEFT" DANGER

Communists' main ideological task in the developing rivalry for influence among the masses of the working class remained the fight against social-reformism, but the further it developed the clearer it became that communist parties could not find forms and methods of revolutionary action appropriate to the political situation without overcoming "leftism" in theory and tactics. The feeding ground of "left" sentiments was the instability of the international situation and the indeterminacy of the outlook for the revolutionary movement.

Lenin's work *'Left-Wing' Communism—An Infantile Disorder*, his other articles, and the discussion and decisions of the Second Congress of the Comintern helped debunk "left romanticism", and convinced many of the enthusiastic and impatient. But they could not change the minds of those for whom "leftism" was a synonym of revolutionism and who continued to persist in their errors. And even less could they correct those for whom "left" declarations served simply as a cover for abandoning revolutionary positions.

Among the latter there were several Dutch and German "Lefts" who attacked the policy of the Comintern and the Soviet government. In the autumn of 1920 a pamphlet by the Dutchman Anton Pannekoek *World Revolution and Communist Tactics* was published in Vienna. He set himself the aim of justifying views "free of the opportunism" into which he alleged the Comintern had fallen when revolutionary development slowed down in Western Europe. He himself subscribed to the radical trend that wanted "to revolutionise the understanding of revolutionaries by word and deed", and "to counterpose the new principles as sharply as possible to the old traditional views".¹

Pannekoek declared the task of leadership of the broad masses' actions, which Communists set themselves, to be unnecessary and impossible. Since revolution was an affair of the masses, he considered that "only the most radical ideas could attract them". It did not embarrass him that the displays of revolutionary adventurism in Germany and Austria had only done harm. He saw the party's job not in organising the masses but exclusively in "bringing them to the highest pitch of activity" and in "smashing the traditional

¹ A. Pannekoek, *Weltrevolution und kommunistische Taktik*, Verlag der Arbeiterbuchhandlung, Vienna, 1920, p. 8.

organisational forms (parliaments and trade unions in the first place) and the old leaders". Displaying a purely anarchistic dislike of any organisation, he counterposed the destructive stage of the revolution to the constructive, saying that both would be more protracted and difficult in Western Europe than in Russia; "a period of social and political chaos will be inevitable there as a transition stage"; the destruction of industrial productive forces by Kolchak and Denikin gave a faint foreboding of what it would be in Europe; "the difficulties of the new organisation of a fully destroyed society" would be so great there that "it is absolutely impossible to draw up a programme of reconstruction in advance".

While understanding, incidentally, that such a "glowing" outlook was unlikely to attract and "enthuse" anyone, Pannekoek declared it impossible in general to win the broad masses for the revolution. In the West, he argued, unlike Russia, "the old capitalist mode of production and the centuries-old highly developed bourgeois culture have put their stamp on the ideas and feelings of the masses of the people".¹

Of course the masses in the West differed substantially from those in Russia. It was also true that the bourgeois system, which had lasted for decades, had put its stamp on the consciousness of the nations of the developed capitalist countries. But, (1) the influence of that factor was not the same; while stuffing the masses with illusions about the omnipotence of bourgeois democracy, capitalism at the same time involuntarily trained them in a spirit of class struggle, and prepared them for an organised attack on its own domination. (2) It was in the conditions of highly organised, manoeuvrable bourgeois society that solidarity and organisation of the masses and their imbuing with the spirit of socialism were particularly necessary. But it was precisely those very important circumstances that Pannekoek tried to gloss over, by resorting to superficial parallels and contrasts.

Herman Gorter took on the same task. In his *Open Letter to Comrade Lenin*, published in Berlin, he said that the proletariat in the West stood quite alone, cut off by a sharp line from all the other classes. It had to make the revolution by itself, without allies, against all the rest. In denying the significance of the proletarian party, and insisting on rejection of work in existing trade unions and of any kind of participation in parliament, he took on the role of spokesman of "ultraradical" views. Openly opposing Lenin, he said that "only example" could serve "to alter the slavish, reformist, social-patriotic masses"; that the party's job was simply to give the masses a shove, but "anyone who ... cannot be won to this road is, however,

¹ A. Pannekoek, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-12, 15-16, 25, 27.

lost and can go to the devil". At the same time he declared the peace policy of the Soviet government to be an "opportunist fraud".¹

Pannekoek also claimed in the postscript to his pamphlet (written after the Second Congress of the Comintern) that Lenin's criticism of the European "Lefts" was based on "equating West European circumstances, parties, organisations, parliamentary practice, etc., with those existing in Russia". He claimed without the slightest proof that the leadership of the RCP(B) and the Soviet government were trying to subordinate the international communist movement to the interests of Russia's state policy, were "renouncing direct aid to the revolution in other lands", and wanted "to fraternise with the West European labour bureaucracy", etc. He did not even baulk at mendaciously declaring the Communist International to be an "instrument" of the Soviet Republic.²

Where Pannekoek's and Gorter's attacks were leading was clearly indicated by the Hamburg "Lefts" Heinrich Laufenberg and Fritz Wolffheim, who passed, in their pamphlet *Moscow and the German Revolution*, from supercilious accusations that backward Russia was trying to lead the advanced labour movement of Europe to preaching the "unification" of Communists ... with the most reactionary German nationalists in some 'national-Bolshevism'".³

The obvious incompatibility of such "leftism" with the ideas and practice of revolutionary struggle put its authors outside the ranks of the communist movement.

"Left" views on the issues of communist parties' tactics had a different character. Sharp discussion developed in almost all the parties anent whether to evaluate the general situation in the labour movement as a temporary hitch or as a real weakening of the revolutionary onslaught; and what, in those circumstances, the actions of the militant vanguard should be. Particularly hot disputes developed in the United Communist Party of Germany.

The VKPD was the first Communist Party in capitalist countries to take the road of practical application of the decisions of the Second Congress of the Comintern, which called for going "deep into the masses" and establishing closer links with them. Following up the initiative of the Stuttgart engineering workers, its Central Committee sent an Open Letter on 7 January 1921 to all labour organisa-

¹ Herman Gorter, *Offener Brief an den Genossen Lenin. Eine Antwort auf Lenins Broschüre: "Der Radikalismus, eine Kinderkrankheit des Kommunismus"*, Verlag der Kommunistischen Arbeiter-Partei Deutschlands, Berlin, 1920, pp. 28, 62, 64, 87.

² A. Pannekoek, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47, 49.

³ H. Laufenberg, F. Wolffheim, *Moskau und die deutsche Revolution. Eine kritische Erledigung der bolschewistischen Methoden*, Hamburg, 1920.

tions—the SPD, USPD, KAPD, and the German DGB, the civil servants' unions, and the syndicalists—in which it called for joint actions against capitalist employers and the capitalist state.

Unlike the Communists' earlier statements, the Open Letter did not make recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat a preliminary condition for united actions. It proposed that all workers' parties and organisations should concentrate their attention on immediate decisive steps in order to realise the immediate concrete demands of the working class, viz., a rise in wages, pensions, and unemployment benefits; provision of food; dissolution of the bourgeois leagues and the setting up of proletarian self-defence squads; an amnesty for political prisoners; and the establishment of trade and diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia. That, the letter said, was "the minimum that the proletariat must now have so as not to die".¹

Publication of the Open Letter stimulated a lively discussion. The leadership of the Social-Democratic Party straight away rejected the proposal, calling it "a new trick of the Communists". The leaders of the USPD declared the new tactic to be evidence of the bankruptcy of the old one, while the KAPD called it "opportunistic, demagogic, and delusory".²

There was nothing surprising in the fact that, after several years of bitter struggle between Communists and Social-Democrats, the road to unity of action was difficult. But the VKPD itself was also not ready internally for such a serious turn. There was still the breeding ground in the party for uneradicated sectarianism. This was exploited by "ultralefts"—Ruth Fischer, Adolf Maslow, and Ernst Friesland (Reuter), who began a campaign against the Central Committee, declaring the tactic of united action "opportunism". There actually were people in the leadership of the VKPD then who were inclined to passivity and a spirit of reconciliation toward centrists, among them the chairman Paul Levi. When he and four others (including Clara Zetkin) resigned from the Central Committee because of the disagreements arising, that markedly strengthened the position of the "ultraleft".³

The new leadership of the VKPD, headed by Heinrich Brandler, treated the Open Letter as at best a propaganda manoeuvre, and held to the view expressed in the manifesto of the unification congress "that the United Communist Party has enough strength, if the cir-

¹ See Arnold Reisberg, *Lenin und die Aktionseinheit in Deutschland*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1964, pp. 76-80.

² Arnold Reisberg, *An den Quellen der Einheitsfrontpolitik*, Vol. 1, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1971, pp. 57-60.

³ *Communists of Western Europe in the Struggle for a United Front of the Proletariat 1920-1923*, Moscow, 1977, pp. 35-36 (in Russian). The dispute of the Central Committee arose over the attitude to Serrati and the formation of the Communist Party of Italy.

circumstances warrant or demand it, to take action on its own".¹

What that meant in fact became clear when grave battles developed in Central Germany in March 1921. On March 19 armed squads of Prussian police were introduced into plants in the Halle-Merseburg industrial area. The proletariat answered this provocation (which was meant to provoke the workers into premature action) by a general strike. In the Mansfeld area thousands of miners took up arms and, led by Max Hoelz, fought the police. The Central Committee of the VKPD, ignoring the defensive character of the fighting, took a risky decision "to pass from the defensive to the offensive". Although no straightforward directive was issued on an armed uprising, the Communists' newspaper *Die rote Fahne* called on the workers to attack, issuing the slogans "Arms in the Workers' Hands" and "Who's Not for Me, Is against Me".²

But in spite of the heroism of the proletarian vanguard of Central Germany, where the Communists had particular influence, its action had no real chances of success. Over the whole country the working class was then capable only of defensive battles, and was not ready to develop a direct fight for power. The Communists' call for a general strike, not to mention the slogan of overthrowing the government, did not get a broad response, although tens of thousands of workers took part in separate solidarity strikes, and even more expressed sympathy at meetings. The government succeeded in inflicting a severe defeat on the proletariat of Central Germany. The repression was brutal; nearly 4,000 who had taken part were sentenced to many years' penal servitude with hard labour.³

The failure of the March rising only strengthened the desire of some of the VKPD's leaders to justify their actions. The March events were described in the *Theses on the March Action* adopted by 26 votes to 14 at an extended session of the Central Committee on 7-8 April, in *Die rote Fahne*, and in special collection of articles⁴ published soon after, as a "breakthrough on the front of passivity and civil peace", and as the beginning of a decisive struggle for power, and a *theory of offensive* was put forward.⁵ Paul Levi, who had resigned from the Central Committee, expressed an opposite point of view, publishing a pamphlet *Our Road. Against Putschism*. Although there was much that was true in his criticism of the "theory of offensive", his description of the March fighting, in which thousands of workers had

¹ H. Küster et al. (Eds.), *Dokumente und Materialien zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. VII/I, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1966, p. 368.

² Arnold Reisberg *An den Quellen der Einheitsfrontpolitik*, Vol. I, pp. 107, 109-111, 120; *Die Märzkämpfe 1921*, Berlin, 1956.

³ Arnold Reisberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-17.

⁴ *Taktik und Organisation der revolutionären Offensive, Lehren der Märzaktion*, Leipzig, Berlin, 1921.

⁵ Arnold Reisberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-27.

taken part, as a "Bakunin putsch" was malicious slander, immediately taken up by all anti-Communists. Levi was expelled from the party for "gross betrayal of confidence and the great harm done to the party".¹

The "theory of offensive", which in fact wrecked the just born tactic of the Open Letter, had wide repercussions outside Germany, and found supporters among the "left"-inclined Communists of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Italy, Poland, and their representatives in the Communist Youth International and the ECCI. As Clara Zetkin remarked: "The 'theory of offensive' was praised like a new Gospel of revolution".²

Not everyone in the leadership of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, as well, understood the essence and significance of the Open Letter. Bukharin attacked it from a "leftist" position, claiming that it passed over the dictatorship of the proletariat in a "non-revolutionary way", and that the VKPD had "renounced real struggle and was romancing about artificial roads, making concessions to other parties". This opposing of final goals to methods and means capable of bringing the masses to an understanding of communist slogans meant a retreat from the policy outlined by Lenin and the decisions of the Second Congress of the Comintern, but Zinoviev, chairman of the ECCI, supported him and the point was declared contentious.³

When Lenin got a chance to go into the issue, he immediately wrote to the German comrades: "The only thing I have seen is the Open Letter, which I think is *perfectly correct* tactics (I have condemned the contrary opinion of our 'Lefts' who were opposed to this letter)."⁴ He soon made a close study of all the literature on the March fighting and the "theory of offensive".⁵ He also received a letter from Clara Zetkin in which she stressed the existence of real chances in Germany for success of the Open Letter tactics, and pointed out that the German party's coming forward "with a slogan of overthrow of the govern-

¹ G. Hortchanski and S. Weber, "The Significance of the Third Congress of the Communist International in Strengthening the VKPD. In *The Third Congress of the Comintern...*, pp. 293-94, 296 (in Russian).

² *Unvergesslicher Lenin. Erinnerungen deutscher Genossen*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1957, p. 102.

³ Arnold Reisberg, *An den Quellen der Einheitsfrontpolitik*, Vol. I, pp. 84-86; *Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International*, Moscow, 1970, p. 511 (in Russian).

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "To Clara Zetkin and Paul Levi", *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, Moscow, 1981, p. 124.

⁵ *Lenin's Library in the Kremlin*, Moscow, 1961, pp. 645, 675 (in Russian); V.I. Lenin, "The Third Congress of the Communist International, June 22-July 12, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, Moscow, 1969, pp. 322-23.

ment was obviously a squib" and got no response among the masses. Citing her counter-resolution, which was rejected by the Central Committee, she noted that it would show how unsound the claim was that she "had joined the 'opportunists' in her old age".¹

Fritz Heckert, arriving from Germany, hoped that Lenin would support the "theory of offensive", but on meeting Lenin he heard that the Party had yielded to provocation, and that it could not win without winning over the masses. "We left Lenin's study crestfallen. I realised now that if our German delegation made any impression with its 'theory of offensive', it would be a bad one."² Lenin soon received letters from Béla Kun, who was the ECCI's representative in Germany, and Paul Frölich, member of the VKPD Central Committee. It followed from them that anyone who did not agree with the thesis of the "Lefts" was a hopeless opportunist, that it was necessary to do the battle as soon as possible with imperialism, to "help the Russians". It already looked like adventurism.³

In connection with the preparations for the Third Congress of the Comintern Lenin made himself familiar in early June 1921 with two drafts of the "theses on tactics". One was written by August Thalheimer and Béla Kun and was a modified version of the one brought by the German delegation. The second had been compiled by Karl Radek on the instructions of the RCP(B) and revised by him taking into account some of Thalheimer and Kun's proposals. Lenin noted on the envelope the special points of objections to the "Lefts": "winning of a majority of the workers", "frankly for the Open Letter", "especially to suggest winning a majority in the trade unions (against the Lefts)".⁴ Analysing the drafts, he noted first of all that Thalheimer's and Kun's theses were "politically utterly fallacious. Mere phrases and playing at Leftism". Radek, however, had shown "*hasty complaisance*", and had spoiled the original draft "by a number of concessions to 'Leftist' silliness". The substitution of the words "winning the *socially decisive sections* of the working class", for the proposition about the need to win "the majority of the working class" "to the principles of communism" was inadmissible. One must not muddle principles and tactics. It was only possible, in certain conditions, to strike a *blow* "by the majority of the socially decisive sec-

¹ Cited from *Leninism and the World Revolutionary Working-Class Movement*, Moscow, 1969, p. 178; and *Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International*, p. 517 (both in Russian).

² *We Have Met Lenin*, FLPH, Moscow, 1939, p. 21.

³ N. G. Sevryugina, "From the History of Lenin's Fight against Dogmatism and Sectarianism in the International Communist Movement (1919-1922)", *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, 1964, No. 2.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 44, 5th Russian Edition, p. 435.

tions of the working class" in the decisive spot after having already won a majority support for "the principles of communism".¹

As the key point in the theses of the Comintern, Lenin considered it necessary to put "clearly, precisely and unequivocally ... as the central ideas" the initial premise: "None of the Communist Parties anywhere have yet won the majority (of the working class), not only as regards organisational leadership, but to the principles of communism as well. This is the basis of everything. To 'weaken' this foundation of the only reasonable tactics is *criminal irresponsibility*." The whole tactics of the Comintern could not be built on the basis of one single possibility, viz., an impending revolutionary explosion in Europe. Its tactics must follow from the main task of Communists, which was: "a steady and systematic drive to win the *majority of the working class*, first and foremost *within the old trade unions*. Then we shall win for certain whatever the course of events. As for winning for a short time in an exceptionally happy turn of events—any fool can do that.

"Hence: the tactics of the Open Letter should definitely be applied everywhere. This should be said straight out, clearly and exactly, because waverings in regard to the Open Letter are extremely harmful, extremely shameful, and *extremely widespread*. We may as well admit this."²

As Lenin considered "playing at Leftism" especially dangerous, and as he knew that several leading members of the ECCI did not fully share his views, he sharpened the issue to maximum: "All those who have failed to grasp the necessity of the Open Letter tactics should be *expelled* from the Communist International within a month after its Third Congress. I clearly see my mistake in voting for the admission of KAPD. It will have to be rectified as quickly and fully as possible."³ He expressed a number of concrete considerations and propositions about the content and form of the theses and suggested that they be taken into account, "if you don't want an open fight at the congress", and concluded: "if opinion is divided on this, I suggest convening the Politbureau."⁴ Its decision, taken on 16 June 1921, indicated concretely how the draft of the theses was to be amended, but Radek continued to assert in the ECCI that the main danger came

¹ V.I. Lenin "The Third Congress of the Communist International, June 22-July 12, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, pp. 319-20.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 320, 321.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 321. At the time Lenin had proposed admitting the KAPD to the Comintern with the rights of an affiliated party. When its role as a disruptive force became clear, it was expelled at the end of 1921.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 320-23; See also F.I. Firsov, "The Third Congress of the Comintern on the Fight for the Masses as the Most Important Political Task of Communist Parties". In *The Third Congress of the Comintern...*, pp. 135-36.

from the right, and that the thesis on winning the majority led to opportunism.¹

Lenin also read an article by Otto Kuusinen and his draft of theses on the organisational building of communist parties. While speaking approvingly of them, he suggested emphasising the idea of the need for communist parties to work "*among the mass of unorganised proletariat and of the proletariat organised ... and the non-proletarian sections of the working people*". That was all the more important precisely because there was "no everyday work (*revolutionary* work) by every member of the Party" in most of the Parties in the West.²

A few days later he had a meeting with Clara Zetkin, who had arrived for the congress. Their talk naturally centred on the issue of the "theory of offensive". The atmosphere in the parties of the Comintern, especially in the Communist Party of Germany, in her view, was electric: "storms, lightnings, and thunder were everyday phenomena". What Lenin's opinions on the March events and "theory of offensive" were, she knew only "from hearsay and guesses" before the meeting. Being prepared for hot fights at the congress, she did not hide her fears in regard to the dangers threatening the German Party and the Comintern if the supporters of the "theory" got their way.

"Lenin", she said later, "laughed his good, self-assured laugh.

"How long have you been one of the pessimists?" he asked. 'Play it cool. At the Congress the trees of the "offensive" theoreticians will not thrive. We, too, will be there. Do you think we "made" revolution without learning from it? And we want you to learn from it too. Is that really a theory? More likely it is an illusion, romanticism, yes, nothing but romanticism. Therefore it was cooked up in "the land of poets and thinkers", with the help of my dear Béla [Kun], who also belongs to a poetically gifted nation and feels himself obliged always to be more left than the left. ... As I've said, I'm not anxious about the attitude of the Congress'."³

Though Lenin was confident of the final outcome, he nevertheless joined in the dispute with all his energy, talking to each delegation as it arrived. It was soon clear to Wassil Kolaroff, a Bulgarian, that an internal struggle was going on within the Russian leadership, as well as among the foreign Communists. Radek worked on the delegates in the spirit of the "theory of offensive". "The strongest parties",

¹ K. Shirinya, "Lenin's Ideas of a United Workers' Front". In *From the History of Comintern*, Moscow, 1970, p. 89 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin "The Third Congress of the Communist International, June 22-July 12, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, pp. 316-18.

³ *Unvergesslicher Lenin. Erinnerungen deutscher Genossen*, Zusammengestellt vom Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim Zentralkomitee der SED, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1960, pp. 100-101, 102, 103, 104.

he said, "especially the German one, support the stand of the 'Lefts'. Trotsky's point of view is 75 per cent opportunist, Lenin keeps to the middle. But of course Lenin is the 'Lefts' most dangerous opponent. He is too busy with government matters, however, and hasn't the time to concern himself with the problems of the Comintern, so the 'Lefts' will carry their point of view."¹

Although Lenin was actually very busy (above all with the problem of the new economic policy), he frequently met the German and other delegations in those days and made himself familiar with the draft resolutions. Particularly heated arguments arose during the meeting of the German delegation with the members of the Politbureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee on 15 June 1921. As Fritz Heckert recalled: "...Lenin chastised us not only for the events in Central Germany, but in general—for the clumsiness, lack of flexibility and dogmatic rigidity which we displayed in our policies.... He condemned our passivity, and our refusal to work in the reformist trade unions."² As for Béla Kun's speech, Lenin remarked that it was profoundly mistaken to think that in order to be a Communist one had always to defend the "Lefts" in the revolutionary movement. When replying to a delegate from the French youth who suggested putting forward a slogan for a strike of conscripts, he said, (possibly remembering the lamentable case of Hervéism), that such actions were fatal.³ These disputes showed how necessary it had become to make a sober, comprehensive analysis of the new situation, and to single out its characteristic features, and possibilities. It was necessary to plan a political course that would fully correspond to the new circumstances. That task was undertaken by the next congress of the Communist International, in which Lenin took a decisive part.

THE COMMUNISTS' WATCHWORD: "TO THE MASSES!"

The Third Congress of the Communist International, which was held in Moscow from 22 June to 12 July 1921, has justly been called a world congress in the record. It was attended by 605 delegates (291 with a decisive vote), representing 103 organisations from 52 countries (including 48 communist parties, eight socialist parties, and

¹ *Lenin and the International Working-Class Movement. Reminiscences*, Moscow, 1934, p. 91 (in Russian).

² *We Have Met Lenin*, pp. 22-23.

³ *Lenin and the Communist International*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 73-74; S.A. Lorzovsky, "Recollections of Lenin", *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, 1966, No. 7, pp. 109-10 (both in Russian).

28 youth leagues). According to the figures received by the ECCI, the communist parties then had more than 2,200,000 members, including 1,500,000 in capitalist countries.

The definition of the new tasks of the Communist International was based on a far-reaching analysis of the world economic and political situation. In a talk with Clara Zetkin Lenin remarked that "the congress's decision on the tactics of the Communist International and all the points of controversy connected with them must be taken and regarded together with our theses on the international economic situation. All these must form a single whole."¹ It was from that angle that the theses and report On the International Situation and the Problems of the Communist International were discussed, and also the theses on tactics and other matters. Speakers returned repeatedly to the assessment of the new international situation and the changes in the Comintern's line stemming from it, and came closer and closer to an understanding of Lenin's propositions.

As the congress noted in its Thesis on the International Situation, the period following the close of the imperialist war had been marked above all by "the elemental nature of its onslaught" and by the "considerable formlessness of its methods and aims" as regards achieving socialism. Lenin's earlier observations on the complicated, zig-zag development of the postwar revolutionary crisis were confirmed. The revolutionary movement had reached its highest point in those countries which had been involved in the war, particularly in the defeated countries. Although "the proletarians of various countries ... exhibited their self-sacrifice, energy, and readiness for the struggle to such an extent as would amply suffice to make the revolution triumphant", it had not happened in Europe. The main reason for the failure was that the working class had not had a strong, centralised Communist Party on the scene ready for action, and that "during the war, and immediately thereafter, ... there was at the head of the European proletariat the organisation of the Second International", which opposed the masses' revolutionary struggle.²

Disputes arose in the commissions and plenary sessions mainly on two points: what period in the development of the world economy was most favourable for the proletariat's political offensive—crisis or prosperity? And in what sense could one speak of the proletariat's offensive against capitalism? The German and Hungarian "Lefts" spoke of the direct dependance of the revolution on economic crisis (citing Marx and Engels without adequate justification). They insisted

¹ *Unvergesslicher Lenin*, p. 103.

² *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress of the Communist International (June 22nd-July 12th, 1921)*, Contemporary Publishing Association, New York City, 1921, pp. 6, 30.

that the defensive struggle had to be waged in "an offensive spirit". And claiming that civil war was inevitable, they tried to introduce statements "as resolute as possible" into the thesis. Thalheimer, for example, disputed the idea that capitalism could achieve a certain stability in the not distant future. Heckert spoke of the non-stop decay of capitalism, which would suffer a catastrophe "even without a correct attack of workers' battalions".¹

The simplified view that a crisis is always "the father of a revolution" found no support at the congress. Speakers pointed out, in particular, that the capitalists had even managed to launch an offensive on the working class in the crisis conditions of 1921, although an aggravation of class conflicts in the separate links of the capitalist system might, of course, arise which would lead to major new battles.

The question of whether there could be a general offensive of the working class on capital, which gave rise to disputes in the editorial commission, was answered as follows by the congress: "One can speak about a general offensive of the working class on capitalism on a historical scale."² This refuted the tendency among some leftists to confuse the concrete, historical situation with the general logic of the development of events in the new epoch. Lenin repeatedly warned against a direct application of the world historical scale to the multilevel, contradictory everyday practice, which was marked by a sudden change in the conditions of the class struggle, and ebbing and flowing of the revolutionary movement, and changes in the social psychology and political moods of the masses.

That approach enabled the congress to give a considered appraisal of the world situation in general, though one not free of certain contradictions. Of decisive importance was the statement that "following the close of the war which has been characterised by the elemental nature of its onslaught, by the considerable formlessness of its methods and aims, and the extreme panic of the ruling classes, the first period of the revolutionary movement may now be regarded as having reached its termination. The self-confidence of the bourgeoisie as a class, and the apparent stability of its government apparatus have undoubtedly become strengthened".³

As a counterweight to the phrase inserted in the resolution (under pressure of the "Lefts"), from which it could possibly be concluded that a slowing of the tempo of the revolution was only one of the possibilities, the thesis said: "It is absolutely beyond dispute that in many countries the open revolutionary struggle of the proletariat

¹ *The Third World Congress of the Communist International. Verbatim Report* (further on—*The Third World Congress...*), Petrograd, 1922, pp. 56, 328, 337 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 336.

³ *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress...*, p. 6

for power has been temporarily delayed. But, in the very nature of the case, it was impossible to expect that the revolutionary offensive after the war not having resulted in an immediate victory, should go on developing incessantly along an upward curve. Political evolution proceeds in cycles and has its ups and downs."¹

While the congress pointed out that the revolutionary possibilities were much reduced in the existing situation, it noted a number of factors at the same time that indicated that they were not yet exhausted. The deepening of the economic crisis, the currency chaos, the breaking of world economic ties, the growth of unemployment, and the fall in workers' standards of living could cause an "aggravation of social antagonisms and social struggles".² The revolutionary proletariat of Germany, for example, retained its fighting strength, despite defeat in the March battles. At the same time the deterioration of the position of the working middle strata, who were still largely a support of the capitalist class, "was steadily weakening this mainstay" (as Lenin put it).³

Further evidence of a possible intensification of the contradictions of capitalism was the instability of international relations in the capitalist world. The Treaty of Versailles had not eliminated the deep-seated disagreements between the victor countries and the vanquished. The occupation of the demilitarised Rhineland by Anglo-French troops, and the threat of occupation of the Ruhr as a means of pressure in the squabbles over reparations had aggravated the political situation in Europe. The congress also pointed out another international contradiction, associated with the fact that "capitalist Europe has completely lost its dominating position in the world economy", which had passed to the United States. In analysing growth of danger of a new world war, the congress formulated a thesis that the proletariat's struggle could become an important factor blocking the unleashing of imperialist wars: "the longer the revolutionary movement of the world proletariat [goes] on, the more inevitably will the bourgeoisie be impelled by the contradiction of the international economic and political situation to make another bloody dénouement on a world-wide scale".⁴

Although there were several formulations in the theses that reflected the ideas of the "Lefts", the congress on the whole gave an estimate of the situation that laid the scientific basis for a realistic

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International...", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 454.

⁴ *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress...*, pp. 19, 25.

political line.¹ The main job of the communist parties of capitalist countries was defined as follows: "to conduct, extend, widen and unite the present defensive fight of the proletariat and *sharpen it towards the final political struggle* in accordance with the course of evolution". Whether the revolutionary movement would advance more quickly or at a slower pace in the immediate future, "the Communist Party must, in either case, be *the party of action*", stand at the head of the fighting masses, teach the masses how to manoeuvre actively, and to equip them with new methods of struggle.²

In the report on the Comintern's tactics, Karl Radek kept in the main to Lenin's line, though he tried to lessen the significance of the German "Lefts'" mistakes, and his own. The general line of the international communist movement should follow from the fact that the world revolution continued to develop, so that it was necessary to unite the revolutionary forces for new battles. When examining the experience of mass struggle in a number of countries, he criticised the passive position of the communist leaders in Italy and Czechoslovakia. The March events in Germany had demonstrated mistakes of another kind; the root fault of the German "Lefts" was that they had suddenly passed from agitation for unity of action to an unprepared assault, and instead of recognising their errors and failures had created a "theory of offensive". This theory did not correspond to reality, and was a playing with military ideas, ignoring the fact that it was impossible to take the offensive without the masses, while the distance between the vanguard and the masses should not be such as to let the enemy beat them separately.³

Since it had been impossible to agree on a single draft of the Thesis on Tactics, because of the disagreements in the preliminary meetings, it was moved at the congress in the name of the delegation of the RCP(B), with an invitation to support it. On July 1, the same day that the discussion on tactics opened in the plenary session, the newspaper *Moskva* (organ of the Third Congress, appearing in German, French, and English) published amendments by the "Lefts", moved in the name of the Austrian, German, and Italian delegations, who were later joined by the German Section of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the majority of the Hungarian delegation, the Communist Youth International, and the Polish delegation. The sense of the 27 amendments, which took up a whole page of the paper, was to shift the accent from the tasks of winning a majority of the work-

¹ K.K. Shirinya, "Lenin's and the Comintern's Working out of the Line of the International Communist Movement in the New Circumstances". In *The Third Congress of the Comintern...*, pp. 59-61.

² *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress...*, pp. 32, 33 (Our italics—Ed.).

³ *The Third World Congress...*, pp. 204-28.

ing class to a struggle against right and centre, and defence of the "theory of offensive". Umberto Terracini was nominated to move the amendments.

The thesis Terracini said, contained "too strong expressions against left trends" while it was necessary to begin a decisive struggle against the right, centre, and semi-centrists (referring, too, to the statements of Zinoviev and Radek in the congress and the Executive Committee). In defence of the "theory of offensive" he said it was necessary to try and understand it, rather than reject it. It meant "tendency toward great activity", and "passage from a passive period to an active one". Here Terracini expressed the idea that there should be no "postponing of revolutionary action until the majority of the proletariat was organised according to the principles of communism" and that it was not at all obligatory "to draw the majority of the proletariat into the revolutionary struggle". Arguments about the majority were suitable for reformists but such a principle "could not be put into a thesis presented to the Communist International".¹

Lenin spoke immediately after Terracini. His first words, that he must, unfortunately, confine himself to self-defence, evoked laughter. He would "very much like to take the offensive", he continued, because offensive action was needed against the views that Terracini had just defended. The draft thesis moved by the RCP(B) was already a compromise, the result of reflections, and meetings with various delegations. The calls to refrain from winning a majority and to reject the tactics of the Open Letter, which was "a model because it [was] the first act of a practical method of winning over the majority of the working class", were extremely dangerous for the Comintern. In Europe especially, he stressed, where almost the whole of the proletariat was organised, it was impossible to triumph without winning that majority.²

He attached great importance to explaining that the idea of the "masses" was not an absolute one, but changed in accordance with the character and level of the struggle. While a few thousand really revolutionary workers were sufficient at the beginning, in order to talk about the masses, it was quite another matter once the revolution had begun. "The concept of 'masses' undergoes a change so that it implies the majority, and not simply a majority of workers alone, but the majority of all the exploited. Any other kind of interpretation is impermissible for a revolutionary, and any other sense of the word becomes incomprehensible." Since Terracini had referred to the fact that the revolution had triumphed in Russia although the party was small, Lenin again reminded the delegates that the

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 235-39.

² V.I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International...", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 468-70.

Bolsheviks had persistently kept a grip on the leadership before and after taking power, and had won a majority of the workers, soldiers, and peasants to their side. "I would not altogether deny that a revolution can be started by a very small party and brought to a victorious conclusion. But one must have a knowledge of the methods by which the masses can be won over. For this thoroughgoing preparation of revolution is essential."¹

As for the "theory of offensive", he continued, there could be no dispute among revolutionaries that a revolutionary offensive was *in general permissible*. The dispute was about advisability of an offensive in a concrete country and a specific period. The unprepared offensive in Germany in March 1921 had been a mistake from which it was necessary to learn. "We must not conceal our mistakes from the enemy. Anyone who is afraid of this is no revolutionary." Lenin also examined the attitude to centrists from the same angle of the need to concentrate all forces on the *preparation* of a revolution. The struggle against the right and the centrists was the main job *in the first stage*, when communist parties and the Comintern were being built. Opportunists were not simply condemned, but expelled from the Comintern; and in the future it would be necessary to do that with others who behaved as Paul Levi had done. But one must not make a sport of this struggle. "Now we must deal with another aspect, which we also consider dangerous... We are confronted now by other, more important questions than that of attack on the centrists." Lenin recalled his posing of the question of the inevitability of two stages in preparation of revolution (repeated in his speech on the Italian issue), and vigorously stressed that the task of the *second stage* was precisely to learn to wage a revolutionary struggle and, rather than repeating general revolutionary slogans, to take wise decisions in which the "fundamental revolutionary principles must be adapted to the specific conditions of various countries."²

Lenin's speech made a deep impression, Pole Warski who spoke next, did not quite speak in the spirit of the amendments of the three delegations that he had been put up to defend. But the "Lefts" did not hasten to admit defeat. Heckert tried sharply, but unconvincingly, to divert Lenin's criticism, on the grounds that the amendments were not aimed against the Open Letter at all or winning of a majority. Lauer (Poland) said that the "fear of adventurism" was excessive and the "left" danger exaggerated. Thälmann justified "left sentiments" by the "revolutionary impatience of the masses". Müntzenberg and Thalheimer, displaying incomprehension of the really altered conditions and the turn that had matured in policy, insisted

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International...", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 476.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 472-474, 465, 477.

on "more equal" criticism of both Right and "Left". Clara Zetkin, Robert Minor (Ballister), Paul Vaillant-Couturier, Tom Bell, and others supported Lenin. Zinoviev, when replying to criticism, recognised that the "left trend" would be dangerous for the movement if it gained the ascendancy. Radek also stressed in his conclusion that it was Communists' job not just to demonstrate their courage, but to defeat the enemy. Unanimous approval of the thesis was obtained in the commission, and it was then endorsed by the congress.¹

Terracini subsequently recalled that Lenin's speech "turned everything upside down, reduced our shortlived constructs of formulas and conceptions to dust and ashes". Lenin, he said "tried to save me, and all of us, from errors that could prove irremediable and fatal not only for us but also for the great and glorious cause of social emancipation".²

The Thesis on Tactics adopted after a heated debate expressed Lenin's idea that "the *world revolution*, i.e., the decay of capitalism, and the concentration of the revolutionary energy of the proletariat, its organisation into an aggressive, victorious power, will require a *prolonged period* of revolutionary struggle." Recalling the variations in the sharpness of the contradictions in various countries and the differences in their social structures, and the high degree of organisation of the bourgeoisie in the most developed capitalist countries the thesis stressed the rightness of Lenin's forecast, expressed during the war, "that the *period of imperialism* was developing into the epoch of *social revolution*... The world revolution is not a process following absolutely straight lines; on the contrary, the periods of the chronic decay of capitalism and the daily, revolutionary undermining activity become at times acute, and develop into severe crises."³

That conclusion was aimed against social reformists who claimed that the period of revolutions had ended for long and that the proletariat could make political and economic advances only through slow, gradual reforms. In fact, however, the deepening economic crisis in the capitalist world, and its socio-economic consequences, the sharpening of positions in foreign policy, and the capitalists' new attack on the workers' standard of living and political rights made an "*aggravation of social antagonisms and social struggles*" possible and even probable.⁴

At the same time the thesis corrected the oversimplified ideas current in the communist movement that the world revolution

¹ *The Third World Congress...*, pp. 249-250, 274, 278, 282-83, 284, 287-89, 295, 300-301, 312, 315, 439.

² *Pravda*, 12 February, 1960.

³ *Theses and Resolutions adopted at the Third World Congress...*, p. 35 (Our italics—Ed.).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

would be immediate, like a gigantic fire, spreading to other countries and engulfing the whole capitalist world. It made it clear that the party was obliged to lead the worker masses into the attack only when and where the conditions were ripe, that is to say, when there were "first and foremost, ... *growing strife and dissensions in the ranks of national and international bourgeoisie*". Furthermore, "*strong ferment in the ranks of the more responsible and important workers*", would also justify the Party to assume the leadership of the offensive against a capitalist government on a wide front". But whether a Communist Party waged a defensive or an offensive struggle would depend on concrete circumstances.¹

The thesis considered the most important job of the international communist movement to be Communists' winning of predominant influence in the majority of the working class, their direct participation in the struggle of the working masses, leadership of that struggle, and *building "during the struggle, great, revolutionary communist mass parties"*.² In generalising the experience of the struggle in various countries, the thesis made a substantial advance in working out a fundamentally new tactical orientation, in which determination of *approaches* to revolution and ways of *drawing the masses* into it were tied in together with problems of the struggle for partial demands.

The congress did not put forward a minimum programme, but frankly posed the question, for the first time, of the significance of the struggle for *partial demands*, and meeting the pressing needs of the proletariat, stating that "it is essential to make use of all the economic needs of the masses, as issues in the revolutionary struggles, which, when united, form the flood of the social revolution". It was the broad scale of the fight for immediate demands that would enable a Communist Party to *radicalise its calls* up to the point of the direct call to overthrow the enemy. Communists must support the *partial struggles* of separate strata or groups of the working class, and of the working class as a whole, with limited aims, for example, against war, against the organisations of strikebreakers and murderers, fascists included. "Every objection to the establishment of such partial demands, every accusation of reformism in connection with these partial struggles, is an outcome of the same incapacity to grasp the live issues of revolutionary action", as denial of work in trade unions or parliamentary activity. "Communists should not rest content with teaching the proletariat its ultimate aims, but should lend impetus to every practical move leading the proletariat into the struggle for these ultimate aims".³

¹ *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress...*, p. 56 (Our italics—Ed.).

² *Ibid.*, p. 38 (Our italics—Ed.).

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 51, 52.

Lenin's recommendation to explain the significance of the Open Letter in the thesis was only partially adopted. The Open Letter was called "an example of the prerequisite of direct action"; it spoke of the need "to rouse the proletariat to a united front", envisaging that "non-communist parties [might] be pressed into this struggle". The thesis also expressed understanding that "the greater the number of workers who join in the battle, the greater the fighting area, the more must the enemy divide and scatter his forces".

It thus set out several of the most important premises of the policy of the united workers' front, but the inertia of the Communists in counterposing their party to all other labour organisations was overcome with great difficulty. Since the possibilities of joint actions with reformist parties were not understood, it appeared that they would result from the influence the Communists would gain in the trade unions and from their "increased pressure on other parties connected with the working masses".¹

A substantial advance was made in the posing of the issue of Communists' relations with the working *middle strata*. While noting that the peasantry in Western Europe, unlike Russia, were not a decisive factor in the revolutionary struggle along with the proletariat, the thesis stressed that "*a part of the peasantry, a considerable section of the petty-bourgeoisie in the towns, the numerous so-called 'new middle-class', the office workers, etc., are ... beginning to pass through a process of fermentation, which draws them out of their political inactivity, and drags them into the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary struggle*". Communists needed not only to pay constant attention to these wavering strata, but also to make use of the fermentation among the petty-bourgeoisie ... "even though it does not lose its petty-bourgeois illusions", and to attract to the proletarian front those of the intellectuals and employees who freed themselves from these illusions.²

The Thesis on the Organisational Construction of the Communist Parties (adopted as drafted by Otto Kuusinen and on the report of Wilhelm Koenen), put forward the idea, in accordance with Lenin's advice, that if the Party was to become the leader of the proletarian movement it must take part in all the spontaneous struggles and movements of the workers, and carry on daily work among the masses. In order to win the *semi-proletarian sections* of the workers as sympathisers of the revolutionary proletarians, the Communists must make use of their special antagonism to the landowners, the capitalists and the capitalist state. They should make use of all everyday occurrences which bring the state bureaucracy into conflict

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 55, 56, 59.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 62.

with the ideals of petty-bourgeois democracy and jurisdiction. It was recommended that the structure and organisation of communist parties should organically combine the principles of centralism and proletarian democracy, ensure internal unity and observance of party discipline by all Communists. A shortcoming of the resolution, noted later by Lenin, was that it was "entirely Russian", i.e. did not take sufficient account of the peculiar conditions and tasks of the struggle of the individual parties, and specific national differences.¹

Problems of the situation in the Soviet Republic had an important place in the congress. It could not be considered that the new economic policy would be immediately understood and correctly appreciated by all the representatives of the international proletarian movement. In order to explain the RCP(B)'s new policy to the delegates Lenin's pamphlet *The Tax in Kind* was circulated in several languages. In his special Report on the Tactics of the RCP(B), Lenin explained the Soviet Republic's economic tasks in detail, examining them in the direct connection with the international situation and the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat.²

His report was criticised by the foreign "ultralefts". The representatives of the KAPD, Sachs and Hempel, who took the line already previously taken by several Dutch and German "left" writers, began to claim that the Russian Communists were in danger of "degenerating" under the influence of economic factors, that the economic ties that Soviet Russia intended to establish with capitalist countries could strengthen capitalism in Western Europe. Seeing in that a contradiction between the interests of the revolutionary workers of the Western countries and those of Soviet power", they proposed that the communist parties of those countries and the Comintern create a "counterweight" to the influence of "Russian state policy". This attempt at disorganisation was cloaked in "left" phrases. Sachs, for instance, said that Western opportunists would say to the workers: "Do not strike because you will harm Soviet Russia." Hempel provoked laughter by his statement that it was necessary to take care that Russia "was supported by the proletariat by purely revolutionary means and not by capitalist ones".³

Lenin, preparing his answer to the KAPD's spokesmen, formulated counter-questions in his notes: "What do you propose? No concessions? No trade? Not to insist on more careful preparations?" Then followed brief notes in which he made the following calculations: it was intended to spend 17 billion gold roubles on the GOELRO

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Fourth Congress of the Communist International, November 5-December 5, 1922", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 430-31.

² V.I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International, June 22-July 12, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 480-81.

³ *The Third World Congress...*, pp. 363-64, 375-78.

plan over ten years. Suppose that ten factories were let to foreign concessionaires for six billion roubles, i.e. an average of 600 million roubles per concessionaire. That, it went without saying, could not "strengthen capitalism" in Western Europe. In the margin he summed up: "To trade and make revolution."¹

The attack by "ultralefts" was not supported even by the many "Left Communists". Henriette Roland-Holst resolutely rejected any talk about the Russian Communists' opportunism. "The Russians," she said, "have not shifted to the right," their calls to circumspection and thorough preparation of the European revolution stem from their confidence in it, and Russia remains the "most reliable pivot of the world revolution".² The congress unanimously approved the tactics of the RCP(B) and called on the proletariat of all countries, in the resolution passed, "to place itself unanimously on the side of the Russian workers and peasants".³

In order to dispel completely the doubts of foreign Communists about the position of Soviet Russia, and the outlook for it, Lenin, advising them to prepare for the European revolution thoroughly, said: "When you ask whether Russia will be able to hold out so long, we answer that we are now fighting a war with the petty bourgeoisie, with the peasantry, an economic war, which is much more dangerous for us than the last war". As for the danger, well, "as Clausewitz said, the element of war is a danger". But it was possible by acting more circumspectly, to win that war. And to the direct question whether Russia could hold out if the European revolution did not occur soon, Lenin answered: "Europe is pregnant with revolution, but it is impossible to make up a calendar of revolution beforehand. We in Russia will hold out, not only five years, but more. The only correct strategy is the one we adopted."⁴

The congress paid much attention to Communists' work in trade unions, co-operative societies, and women's and youth organisations. Considerable experience had already been gathered then, which called for generalisation, and a number of issues needed further discussion. On the eve of the congress the ECCI had pointed out that a need to define the Comintern's attitude to the International Trade Union Council had matured; i.e. whether there should be two

¹ V.I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 44, 5th Russian Edition, pp. 439-41.

² *The Third World Congress...*, pp. 378-79.

³ *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress...*, p. 130. Spokesmen of the Worker Opposition in the RCP(B) also appealed to the congress with a leftist criticism of the new economic policy. Some months later they developed their own criticism in the Statement of 22. The special commission set up by the ECCI (Clara Zetkin, Marcel Cachin, Umberto Terracini, and others) considered the statement unjustified and groundless.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "The Third Congress of the Communist International, June 22-July 12, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 327.

parallel organisations or whether the Council should become a section of the Comintern? Considering that a great deal as regards building the international labour movement hung on the answer to these questions, it suggested that all organisations should study them carefully from various aspects.¹

During the proceedings of the Third Congress an International Congress of Revolutionary Trade and Industrial Unions opened in Moscow on 3 July 1921, which founded the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU), or Profintern; 380 delegates from 41 countries in Europe, Asia, America, Africa, and Australia attended, representing 17 million workers.² In his greetings to them, Lenin wrote: "It is hard to find words to express the full importance of the International Congress of Trade Unions. The winning of trade unionists to the ideas of communism is making irresistible headway everywhere, in all countries, throughout the world. The process is sporadic, overcoming a thousand obstacles, but it is making irresistible progress".³ The congress was organised under the slogan "Moscow or Amsterdam?", but the resolution passed, after bitter discussion with the "disrupters" of the old trade unions (the German syndicalists, American IWW (Industrial Workers of the World), Czechoslovak "ultralefts") said: "*not disruption but winning of the unions*, i.e. the millions of the masses who are in the old unions, —that is what the revolutionary struggle must centre on. The slogan 'war on the unions' prevents winning of the masses and so estranges us from the social revolution."⁴

A heated dispute arose with the anarchosyndicalists as well on the issue of the unions' political activity. The French revolutionary syndicalists stubbornly defended "neutralism". Transferring their experience of struggle against the dependence of unions on reformist politicians to quite other circumstances, they drew a conclusion that it was necessary to guarantee the Profintern's independence of the Comintern. The agreement reached on "mutual representation" of these organisations proved short-lived. The main point, however, was the founding of an international revolutionary organisation of trade unions that oriented their members on real struggle for industrial unions, works committees, workers' control, and improvement of working conditions.⁵ The Comintern Congress "promised its

¹ *The Communist International*, 1921, No. 17.

² G.M. Adibekov, *The Red International of Labour Unions. Essays in the History of the Profintern*, Moscow, 1971, p. 14 (in Russian).

³ V.I. Lenin, "Message of Greetings to the First International Congress of Revolutionary Trade and Industrial Unions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 501.

⁴ *The 1st International Congress of Revolutionary Trade and Industrial Unions, Verbatim Report*, Moscow, 1921, pp. 15, 16. Supplement (in Russian).

⁵ *The Profintern in Resolutions*, Moscow, 1928, pp. 21-25, 28-29, 32-34; see also A. Lozovsky, *Anarchosyndicalism and Communism*, Moscow, 1924, pp. 9-22 (both in Russian).

support to the Red International of Trade Unions" in a special resolution. The Communist International and the Red International of Trade Unions.¹

The Comintern congress also adopted a thesis on The Work of Communists in the Co-operative Societies, which advised "the parties, groups and organisations to carry on energetic propaganda for the idea of Communist Cooperatives" in order to "transform the co-operative movement into an instrument of revolutionary class struggle", and to create an "alliance of the co-operatives with ... the Red International of Labour Unions". The congress instructed the ECCI to set up a Co-operative Department, for the purpose of realising on an international scale the revolutionary tasks set forth in the theses.² The Soviet consumer co-operative organisation, Centrosoyuz, joined the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA).

The Second Congress of the Communist Youth International was held almost simultaneously in Moscow from July 9 to 23. This international body had been founded back in November 1919 at an illegal congress of revolutionary youth organisations in Berlin (because of the fall of Soviet Hungary it had not been possible to hold it in Budapest).³ The CYI was heir to the best revolutionary traditions of the Socialist Youth International founded under the guidance of Karl Liebknecht. At the time of its Second Congress it had around 600,000 members in 48 leagues.⁴ The ECCI co-opted a representative of the CYI to its membership with a consultative vote, and the Second Congress of the Comintern had accepted it as a section of the Comintern.

There were strong "leftist" sentiments in the national youth leagues and in the Executive Committee of the CYI. The secretary of the EC CYI, Wilhelm Münzenberg defended these positions at the Third Congress of the Comintern. After a sharp debate the congress of the CYI rejected the former "vanguardist" positions in theory and practice, adopted the thesis of the Comintern that "the role of vanguard in the form of independent political action and political leadership has been taken over by the Communist Party".⁵ The CYI congress concretised the participation of youth in common revolutionary front, the forms of the relations between youth leagues and

¹ *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress...*, pp. 131-41.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 150-53, 154.

³ *Unter dem roten Banner. Bericht über den ersten Kongress der Kommunistischen Jugendinternationale* (Berlin, s.d.), pp. 9-10, 54-57, 57-58, 65-68. Given in Russian translation in M.M. Mukhamedzhanov *et al.* (Eds.), *The Comintern, CYI and the Youth Movement (1919-1943). Documents*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1977, pp. 46-60 (in Russian).

⁴ *The Main Stages of the International Youth Movement (1880s-1970s)*, Moscow, 1976, p. 24 (in Russian).

⁵ *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress...*, p. 185.

party organisations, and resolved to carry out an organisational restructuring of the national leagues so as to bring them closer to the working youth.¹

The Second International Conference of Women Communists was held in Moscow in June 1921, not long before the Third Comintern Congress. 82 delegates from 28 countries took part. An International Women's Secretariat (IWS) had been formed soon after the first conference of Communist women, which was held at the same time as the Second Congress of the Comintern. The veteran leader of the international organisation of socialist women, Clara Zetkin, became general secretary of the IWS. The conference discussed the work of the IWS among women workers and recommended it to take greater account of their living and working conditions. Clara Zetkin, Alexandra Kollontai, and others had to parry "left" attacks from anti-parliamentarians, Nancy Smiles (Great Britain) and Henriette Roland-Holst van der Schult (Holland).²

The Congress of the Comintern, after hearing Clara Zetkin's report on the work of the conference, stressed the need to employ special methods of work among working women and housewives, to differentiate the demands put forward, and to set up women's departments in all communist parties.³

The day after the close of the Third Congress, July 13, 1921 the Executive Committee of the Communist International held its founding session. In accordance with the Rules the Russian delegation consisted of five persons; the German and Czechoslovak parties and the EC of the CYI had two delegates each, and 19 parties one each. A Small Bureau of the ECCI (renamed the Presidium of the ECCI on 14 September 1921) was elected, consisting of G. E. Zinov'ev (chairman), Karl Radek, Egidio Gennari, N. I. Bukharin, Béla Kun, Fritz Heckert, and Boris Souvarine, and a Secretariat consisting of Otto Kuusinen, Mátyás Rákosi, and Jules Humbert-Droz.⁴

On 17 July 1921 the ECCI issued a call (also signed by the EC of the CYI) "To New Work and New Struggles", which said that the congress had been a "great review of forces of the communist proleta-

¹ M.M. Mukhamedzhanov, "The Third Congress of the Comintern and the Youth Movement". In *The Third Congress of the Comintern...*, p. 256 (in Russian).

² G.E. Pavlova, E.A. Sevryugina, "The Communist International on the Work of Communist Parties among Women (1919-1921)". In *The Third Congress of the Comintern...*, pp. 267-70 (in Russian).

³ *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress...*, pp. 155-78, 179-80, 181-83.

⁴ *The Activity of the Executive Committee and Presidium of the EC of the Communist International from 13 July 1921 to 1 February 1922*, Petrograd, 1922, pp. 5-7 (further on—*The Activity of the ECCI*) (in Russian).

riat of all countries", and that the "first slogan addressed by the Third International to the Communists of all countries" was "*To the Masses!*". The second call was "*Forward to meet the new great battles! Arm yourselves for new struggles!*" The third—"Straighten out the general battlefield of the proletariat!"¹

The Comintern frankly pointed out the danger of opposing the still inadequate, only developing strategy of the proletariat, which is only yet preparing for the struggle, to the developed strategy of the world capitalist class ready ... to repulse all uprisings of the proletariat by force of arms and to provoke, when necessary, premature uprisings of the proletariat. The basis of its strategy must therefore be application of the one infallible weapon, namely the united compact front of the proletariat.

The Communist International, the call said further "deems it its duty to declare frankly and distinctly to the workers of all countries: the vanguard must not let itself be drawn into decisive fights alone and isolated, [and] when forced into isolated fight, the vanguard of the proletarian army must evade the armed clash with the enemy", and remember that "*the source of the victory of the proletariat over the armed white-guards consists in its reliance on the masses*". It therefore made it a foremost task "*to free the widest possible masses of workers from the influence of the Social-Democratic parties and the treacherous trade-union bureaucracy*", and said that this was "only possible if the Communists of all countries prove themselves ... *the champions of the workers in all their everyday needs*", and could not be done by empty words, or "by theoretical arguments about democracy and dictatorship, *but only by supporting the workers in their struggles for bread, for wages, for houses and all the necessities of life*".

The call attaching decisive importance to Communists' practical work to win the masses, stressed that "it is only through the struggle for the ordinary needs and interests of the workers that we can build up a united front of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, and put an end to the splitting up of the proletariat, which is the basis for the continued existence of the bourgeoisie. '*Be the vanguard of the working masses when they begin to march forward; be their heart and brain*'"—that was what the Third International said to Communist Parties.

"To be the vanguard means—to march at the head of the masses as their bravest, most conscious and most circumspect section. It is only by forming such a vanguard that the Communist Parties will be able, not only to build up a united proletarian front, but also to lead the proletariat to final victory."² The call not only made some of the

¹ *Theses and Resolutions Adopted at the Third World Congress...*, pp. 191, 192 (Our italics.—Ed.).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 193-97 (Our italics.—Ed.).

formulations of the Third Congress's tactical decisions more precise, but gave them much greater purposefulness, and made them more practically real.

The political line developed by the Third Congress was based on a Marxian scientific forecast and imbued with unwavering confidence in the final triumph of the world proletarian revolution. The congress rejected Social-Democratic estimates of the gradual transformation of capitalism. At the same time it pointed out that in capitalist countries the revolution developed in a more complicated way than had previously been thought, that the preparatory stage would take longer and require enormous efforts. It rejected the attempts of "left" sectarians to push the world communist movement onto the road of "revolutionary" adventure, and at the same time developed and concretised ideas about the roads of development of the proletarian revolution and mobilisation of the masses during the preparations for it.

Right from the start Lenin saw something substantially more in the line adopted by the Third Congress than a simple improvement of tactical methods of struggle. When meeting delegations from various countries, he waged a very sharp polemic to clear up the conviction of many Communists that "leftism" was a synonym of militant revolutionism."¹ After the congress he told the delegates of countries where "left" sentiments were particularly strong: "You will now all return home and tell the workers that we have become more reasonable than we were before the Third Congress. You should not be put out by this; you will say that we made mistakes and now wish to act more carefully; by doing so we shall win the masses over from the Social-Democratic and Independent Social-Democratic parties, masses, who, objectively, by the whole course of events, are being pushed towards us, but who are afraid of us." Then, having explained that the Bolsheviks, too, had had to fight "leftist" moods in April 1917, he concluded: "Our sole strategy now is to become stronger, hence cleverer, more sensible, more 'opportunistic', and that is what we must tell the masses."²

It was not fortuitous that he did not speak just about tactics at the meeting, but rather about "new tactics", the sense of which was that "we mustn't get nervy; we cannot be late, rather we may start

¹ When he learnt that the German comrades felt his words were impolite he apologised twice and also expressed his regret in a written form for causing discontent of the Hungarian Communists. (V.I. Lenin, "To Wilhelm Koenen, August Thalheimer and Paul Fröhlich", *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, 1981, p. 187; *Idem*. "To the Participants in a Sitting of the Commission on Tactics of the Third Congress of the Comintern", *ibid.*, pp. 203-04).

² V.I. Lenin, "The Third Congress of the Communist International, June 22-July 12, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, pp. 324, 326.

too early". He spoke, moreover, about the *strategy*, adopted by the congress, using the French proverb *il faut reculer, pour mieux sauter* ("you have to step back to make a better jump").¹ In the notes he made during the meeting, he wrote: "*a strategic retreat*—now (on an international scale)".²

He described the critical significance of the period then in the development of the world revolution even more clearly in a talk with Clara Zetkin before her departure for home. The resolutions passed, he said, were "really a *turning point*" in the development of the Comintern. They had closed the first period in its development on the road to a revolutionary mass party. By virtue of that the congress had finally to put an end to "leftist" illusions that the world revolution marched forward continuously at its stormy, original pace, that Communists were on the crest of a second revolutionary wave, and that the possibility of ensuring victory of our banner depended exclusively on the party's will and activity. And that, in the last analysis, was not even revolutionary, but simply a petty-bourgeois view of sorts. In conclusion he said that it was necessary always to think about the masses; then the German Communists would make a revolution as the Bolsheviks had done; with the masses and through the masses.³

In his letters to fraternal parties sent after the congress Lenin called on them to grasp and publicly recognize the change in approach to the masses. When explaining to German Communists why it had been "necessary" for him to be on the *right* wing at the congress, he wrote that the "Lefts", in particular the German ones, *had rather exaggerated* the danger of centrism, and had begun to make a caricature of revolutionary Marxism, and to turn the fight against "centrism" into a ridiculous sport. That threatened to compromise the revolutionary Marxists themselves and to save centrism. He therefore saw the nub of the congress in correcting this exaggeration that "the best and most loyal elements" had made. In his words, the correction was "*a straightening out* of the line of the Communist International".⁴

Later, expressing the conviction that his stand—to be on the right wing at that time—had been the only proper one, he pointed out another reason for his behaviour: viz., the need to counter the fact that "a very large (and influential) group of delegates, headed by many German, Hungarian and Italian comrades occupied an inordinately 'Left' and incorrectly Left position, and far too often, instead of soberly weighing up the situation that was not very

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

² V. I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 44, 5th Russian Edition, p. 458 (Our italics—Ed.).

³ *Reminiscences of Lenin*, Vol. 5, Moscow, 1970, pp. 32, 33 (in Russian).

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "A Letter to the German Communists", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 517, 520.

favourable for immediate and direct revolutionary action, ... vigorously indulged in the waving of little red flags".¹

On the basis of the theses and resolutions of the Third Congress and the experience of the Communist Parties in carrying out the slogan "To the Masses!" in practice, a beginning could have been made in developing the policy of a united labour front. During the search for concrete slogans linking the day-to-day fight against capital's offensive with the movement for the ultimate goal, this idea got an increasingly clear image of common action of workers belonging to various political trends against capitalism and reaction.²

In March 1922 Lenin said, speaking at the Eleventh Congress of the RCP(B), that at the recent plenum of the ECCI some foreign Communists "burst into tears in a disgraceful and childish manner" because "the good Russian Communists were retreating". It was a difficult business to retreat, Lenin remarked, especially after a victorious attack, but just because "we had captured so much in the first onslaught, on the crest of the wave of enthusiasm displayed by the workers and peasants...", this fact created the real possibility to retreat "without losing our main and fundamental positions". The most dangerous thing was panic, which could wreck discipline, so that at such a time "the slightest breach of discipline must be punished severely, sternly, ruthlessly". Now, he stressed, "the retreat has come to an end; it is now a matter of regrouping our forces. These are the instructions that the Congress must pass so as to put an end to the fuss and bustle."³

Somewhat earlier, in a speech in October 1921, he had recalled a siege of Port Arthur by which the Japanese had captured the fortress in 1904 after a number of unsuccessful attacks. He applied the idea of *passing from storming* (or frontal assault) *to siege* now to both the turns that had to be made in the spring and summer: to the transition to the new economic policy in Soviet Russia; and to the new strategy and tactics of the international communist movement. These turns had had different causes and the temporary withdrawals connected with them had been different in character, but the idea "from assault to siege" had not only been clear as a model, but had been full of content and meaning. It eliminated the simplified antinomy: offensive-defensive. It was also not a matter of a simple transition from attack to defence. In politics, as in war, the idea of siege differed from attack mainly in tempo. But however long it

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Notes of a Publicist", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 208.

² *A Short Historical Essay on the Communist International*, Moscow, 1969, p. 144 (in Russian).

³ V.I. Lenin, "Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 27-April 2, 1922", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 280-82, 285.

took, it remained *active*, and had nothing in common with passive waiting in defence. Siege had the same aim as assault, but employed other methods, means, and techniques; it posited a whole system of preparations and intermediate measures, a regrouping of forces, a bringing up of reserves, and various manoeuvres, including both defence and temporary withdrawals. "The Port Arthur of international capitalism," Lenin said, was not just being besieged by our army. "In every capitalist country there is a steadily growing army" taking part in the siege. It was useless to ask when this fortress would fall, because "the only thing we know is that in the long run, the fortress of the international Port Arthur must inevitably be captured".¹ Those words did not simply express the hope or desire, but rather the conviction, of the leader of the revolution, based on sober understanding that the forces of the working class and its allies were growing throughout the world, and that their ability to master all the means and forms of struggle were improving.

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Seventh Moscow Gubernia Conference of the Russian Communist Party, October 29-31, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 107.

Chapter 10

PROBLEMS OF UNITED ACTIONS BY THE PROLETARIAT

CAPITAL'S OFFENSIVE AND THE DANGER OF FASCISM

At the end of 1921 the world economic crisis began to develop into a depression, but the bourgeoisie did not think of relaxing its pressure on the working class either in the economic and social sphere, or in politics. It continued to whittle away or wipe out the gains the workers had made in stubborn struggle in the years of revolutionary upsurge, and endeavoured to undermine their growing organisation and to increase exploitation. On the pretext of a need to rationalise production, the bourgeoisie mounted a campaign against the trade unions, which had become a significant force, tried to break the restrictions on the working day and to cut wages. The capitalists also looked for new means of disorganising the labour movement, in addition to their traditional ones, in order to weaken its striking force and break its fighting spirit. In certain countries, where the revolutionary struggle had reached its zenith, the capitalist class turned to the support of a new movement deeply hostile to the proletariat, i.e. fascism.

The first country where the revolutionary working class came face to face with fascism was *Italy*. The economic crisis had caused a particularly steep fall in industrial production there. The number of unemployed reached nearly 400,000 in the summer of 1921, four times as many as the year before, and was more than 600,000 in January 1922.¹ The bourgeoisie tended to shift the whole burden of the crisis onto the working class, but the proletariat's activity, which had been demonstrated particularly clearly in the widespread occupation of factories, and in the success of the Socialist Party in the local elections in November 1920 (when it won more than a quarter of the municipalities and more than a third of the provincial boards) showed that it would not be easy to break the workers'

¹ *Annuario Statistico Italiano*, Second Series, Vol. IX (1922-1925), Rome, 1926, p. 292.

resistance by the ordinary methods. The bourgeoisie also became alarmed at the growing movement of peasants and agricultural labourers.

In those circumstances the employers, agrarian magnates, and ruling circles began to incline more and more to using fascist organisations. The rise of fascist unions (*fasci di combattimento*) in Italy was linked with the world war and its aftermath. Considerable strata of the population, above all many ex-servicemen, had had their hopes blighted, and were bitterly disappointed by what they considered the "unjust" peace terms as regards Italy. Those who were hostile to the proletariat's revolutionary struggle, and who considered the Italian bourgeois-democratic state too weak and incapable of serving their interests, formed the core of the fascist leagues. Jingoistic and nationalist sentiments were merged in them with an acute thirst for social changes. The movement was led by a renegade from socialism, Benito Mussolini. Initially he supported a noisy campaign for the annexation of Fiume, which developed in the autumn of 1919 into seizure of the town by force by a squad of legionaries formed by the writer Gabriele D'Annunzio.

In the autumn of 1920 fascist armed squads (*squadre*), exploiting the defeat of the working class, passed from isolated terrorist acts to systematic attacks on labour organisations. They began to smash up the premises of Left newspapers and local branches of workers' parties, People's Houses, chambers of labour, and labour exchanges. Many employers, big farmers, and some civil servants approved of the organised violence. There were influential advocates of using the fascists as a weapon to suppress the revolutionary movement in the Giolitti Government, among the judicial authorities, in the internal affairs agencies, and in the General Staff. The bourgeois political parties' solidarity with the fascists had already been displayed in November 1920 when single, "national" lists that included fascist leaders had been put up in the local elections.

The fascists, having been confirmed in the flattering role of bearers of the "national idea" and pioneers of the anti-socialist struggle, carried out a large-scale provocation on 21 November 1920 against the new municipal council of Bologna, in which Socialists had a majority. Armed fascists opened fire in the council chamber, and on the square outside, where thousands of people had gathered; 16 people were killed, and 58 wounded.¹ These bloody events were a signal for pogroms and "punitive expeditions" against farm labourers in Emilia and Tuscany. In 1921 the fascists launched veritable civil war against labour and democratic organisations. In the first half of the year

¹ 40 Years of the Italian Communist Party, Moscow, 1961, pp. 20-21 (in Russian).

squadre wrecked and burned 119 chambers of labour, 59 People's Houses, 107 premises of co-operative societies, 83 buildings of peasants' leagues, 141 premises of the branches and study groups of workers' parties, 28 trade union committees, and the editorial offices of many labour newspapers.¹

Resistance to the fascists' attacks was spontaneous and disunited. Labour organisations were not prepared materially or politically to repulse them, and their fight was defensive from the outset. The parliamentary elections in May 1921 showed that the influence of the workers' parties had fallen compared with both the elections of 1919 and the local elections of 1920. Instead of 156 seats, the two parties, which stood separately, got 138 (the PSI getting 123 and the PCI 15). The parties of the government majority and the fascists (although the latter violently attacked Giolitti's Government) put forward a single list of the "national bloc". The fascists, who got 35 seats that way, stepped up their parliamentary and extraparlimentary activity.

The growth of the fascist menace evoked a spontaneous desire of the Italian workers to rebuff them. Committees of proletarian defence were set up in several cities that united Communists, Socialists, activists of the reformist trade unions, anarchists, Catholics, and people of no party. On the initiative of the proletarian leagues of war veterans and disabled, an anti-fascist movement arose whose members called themselves *arditi del popolo* (people's valiants).² A battalion of *arditi* took on defence of a mass meeting in Rome in July 1921 that called for efforts by all workers to put an end to fascist outrages. A procession of 3,000 *arditi* marched through the streets of the capital. Squads consisting mainly of workers began to be formed in many cities (Turin, Genoa, Naples). In Genoa the local Communists did much to organise *arditi*; one of the squads formed called itself after Lenin. The movement had a profoundly popular character, and united not only veterans but also workers (Communists, Socialists, anarchists, Republicans, and Catholic *Popolari*).³ It could have become the nucleus of an anti-fascist front arising through initiative from below, but its leaders rejected contacts with the parties of the working class, while the Communists and Socialists (albeit for different motives) did not support the movement, which gradually faded away.⁴

¹ Paolo Spriano, *Storia del Partito comunista italiano*, Vol. 1, Einaudi Editore, Turin, 1967, p. 131.

² During the war, the soldiers of commando squads had been called *arditi*. Many of them later joined the fascist *squadre* or D'Annunzio's legion.

³ B.R. Lopukhov, *Fascism and the Labour Movement in Italy, 1919-1929*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 129-34, 136-38 (in Russian).

⁴ *Communists of Western Europe in the Struggle for a United Proletarian Front. 1920-1923*, Moscow, 1977, p. 206 (in Russian).

The leadership of the PSI rejected armed opposition to fascism in general and recommended only "passive resistance", counting on being able to induce Parliament and the government to take steps to suppress fascist terror. Together with the leaders of the CGL, they signed a "conciliation pact" with the fascists on 3 August 1921. This agreement on mutual repudiation of action paralysed the workers' resistance, and gave the fascist squads a chance to regroup their forces and pass to the offensive.¹

In contrast to the leadership of the PSI, the Communists considered it necessary to give the fascists a resolute rebuff, but their stand was seriously weakened by the sectarian, "left"-extremist policy of the group led by Bordiga, which refused any co-operation with other parties and organisations, forbade Communists to join the *arditi del popolo* movement (on the pretext that it was not purely proletarian), and gave a directive to form separate Communist armed squads to fight the fascists.²

In November 1921, at the congress of the fascist leagues, which had more than 300,000 members, the National Fascist Party was founded. Its programme, which counterposed the idea of a united nation as the dominant form of social organisation to the class struggle and socialism, demanded the establishment of a strong political power, conversion of the liberal state into a "corporate" one, and declared fascism to be the "political, military, and economic organism" capable of creating a "Great Italy". The fascists, displaying tactical cunning, exploited the antagonisms between their bourgeois rivals, and began to draw close to the Vatican. The numerous squads were soon converted into a centralised militia. In an effort to bring the masses of the workers under their influence, the fascists infiltrated the trade union movement. In 1921, at the congress of fascist trade unions a National Confederation of Trade Union Corporations was founded: of industrial labour, agricultural labour, trade and commerce, the middle classes and intellectuals, and maritime workers. Anarchosyndicalist organisations were soon included in the Confederation, which proclaimed the principle of class collaboration. Within a year it had quadrupled in size, and by the end of 1922 had a million members. Fascist influence was also extended to the youth, especially the students.³

Underestimation of the fascist danger and lack of proper attention to the true nature of fascism were common at the time to the working-

¹ *Thirty Years of the Life and Struggle of the Italian Communist Party*, Moscow, 1953, pp. 135, 150-51 (in Russian).

² Paolo Spriano, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

³ For fuller details see Paolo Alatri, "Le origini del fascismo", Roma, Ed. riuniti, 1956; *A History of Fascism in Western Europe*, Moscow, 1978, pp. 56-63 (in Russian).

class movement not just of Italy. It seemed to many then that fascism was an ordinary instrument of counter-revolution, that it would quickly become obsolete, and that the bourgeoisie would return to the usual parliamentary practice of government, relying on the Social-Democrats, who therefore remained the main obstacle on the path of revolution. That was confirmed, it seemed, by the experience of other countries.

Fascist leagues emerged in *Germany* at almost the same time. Their rise there, too, was largely a consequence of the war, deceived hopes, and wounded national pride. The fascist organisations mainly attracted ex-servicemen who had not found a place in life, and also disappointed petty proprietors, and lumpenproletarian elements. On the ideological plane they were the direct heirs of the reactionary, chauvinistic, anti-semitic organisations, of which there had always been many, especially in Berlin and Munich. At the same time the German fascists absorbed certain elements of reactionary, militarist "Prussian socialism" and the anti-capitalist demagoguery of the so-called *Völkische*. While displaying extreme hostility to Marxism on that basis, they made efforts to draw workers disappointed by the failures of the revolutionary struggle into their organisation as well.¹

The forerunner of the fascist party, the German Workers' Party, had been founded in Munich in January 1919. In March 1920 it was renamed the National-Socialist German Workers' Party, borrowing this title from the Austrian fascists. With Adolf Hitler's rise to leadership the party carried on an active propaganda campaign in Bavaria in the spirit of bellicose nationalism, anti-communism, racism, and revanchism. The 25-point programme compiled by Anton Drexler, Gottfried Feder, and Hitler, called for the formation of a Great Germany, abrogation of the Treaty of Versailles, and the creation of strong authority, and put forward demagogic watchwords: "The common good is greater than the personal", "Elimination of percentage slavery", etc.²

The terrorist, violent character of the fascist movement was not fully displayed immediately. In Austria, it is true, military-fascist squads of the Heimwehr, which got hold of weapons from the state arsenals, had begun to be formed at the end of 1918. Very close ties were soon established between the Austrian and Bavarian militarised organisations (Orka, Orgesch). In Germany the "Volunteer Corps", commanded by the most reactionary officers and generals, had played

¹ Konrad Heiden, *Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus. Die Karriere einer Idee*, Rowohlt, Berlin, 1933, pp. 12-27.

² For more details see A.A. Galkin, *German Fascism*, Moscow, 1967; L.I. Gintsberg, *The Workers' and Communist Movements in Germany in the Fight against Fascism (1919-1933)*, Moscow, 1978 (both in Russian); Francis L. Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe*, U.C. Press, Berkeley, Calif., 1972.

the main role in suppressing the revolution. In view of the Versailles limitations on its size, the Reichswehr could only absorb some of them into its establishment. In 1921 the Nazis began to set up a special military organisation, the *Sturmabteilung* (Storm Troops), which was eagerly joined by cutthroats who were still without a job. The terrorist bands, which attacked workers' meetings and smashed up clubs and trade unions, were soon issued with rubber truncheons and revolvers, and also with bombs and hand-grenades. In the early 20s, however, the Hitler storm troopers and the Austrian Heimwehr, being strong-arm groups, played no role in high-level government policy. The bourgeoisie, relying on the support of the right-wing Social-Democratic leaders, still depended on traditional governmental means of holding the revolutionary workers under. Only individual magnates began to finance the Hitlerite party and similar organisations, counting on using them in the future.

The conditions of the proletarian struggle remained complicated in Germany. The fight against "ultraleftism" continued in the United Communist Party of Germany. In his letter of 14 August 1921 to the German Communists, Lenin advised them not to lose their composure and self-control, to correct the errors of the past systematically, to try steadily to win over the majority of the worker masses, and to "work out a strategy that is on a level with the best international strategy of the most advanced bourgeoisie, which is 'enlightened' by age-long experience in general, and the 'Russian experience' in particular." Because neglect of, or fear of, admitting the truth that the present army of Communists was "still poorly trained and poorly organised", and that it still needed to be tested "in all sorts of manoeuvres, all sorts of battles, in attack and in retreat", could do enormous harm to the cause of the revolution.¹

The resolutions of the Jena (Seventh) Congress of the Communist Party of Germany², which opened on 22 August 1921 (the Party then had 180,000 dues-paying members), marked a favourable turn, above all in a return to the tactics of the Open Letter. A programme of immediate demands was formulated. Soon the Party, while striving for unification of the forces of the working class, agreed instead to support the "Ten Demands" on fiscal and economic policy put forward on November 15 by the Association of German Trade Unions. These demands envisaged a raising of wages and benefits, improvement of the position of the unemployed, control over the monopolies, socialisation of the coal industry, and other points.

The Social-Democratic Party, which had more than 1,200,000 members, adopted a new Party programme at its congress in Görlitz

¹ V.I. Lenin, "A Letter to the German Communists", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 513-14, 520.

² The Congress decided to delete "United" from the name of the Party.

in September 1921. This programme consolidated the ideological victory of the reformist conception of "democratic socialism" as a kind of "third way" between capitalism and communism. It continued to talk about socialisation of the land, minerals, and sources of energy, state control over private property in the means of production, extension of social policy, democratisation of court procedure, and separation of Church and State. It was all, however, reduced to nought by the statement that these demands could only be implemented by reform of the Constitution on the basis of the Weimar Republic. A majority of the Congress, furthermore, rejected the proposal to restore unity of the proletariat, and instead proclaimed a coalition of the SPD with all the bourgeois parties, including the Right, to be the Party's basic policy.¹ Even in Kautsky's view the Görlitz programme was a step back compared with the Erfurt one.² He himself had then completed his revisionist "enrichment" of Marxism, which slipped in his own description of the transition period between capitalism and socialism (based on a government coalition of Social-Democracy and bourgeois parties) for Marx's, which called for the dictatorship of the proletariat.³

The Independent Social-Democratic Party (which again had more than 300,000 members) also discussed programmatic and political demands at its congress in Leipzig in January 1922. It continued to recognise the dictatorship of the proletariat, to express solidarity with Soviet Russia, and to reject the coalition policy of the SPD—but only in words. The manifesto adopted by the congress formulated economic and socio-political tasks, including a demand for "socialisa-

¹ *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands abgehalten in Görlitz vom 18. bis 24. September 1921*, Buchhandlung "Vorwärts", Berlin, 1921, pp. iii-vi.

² Karl Kautsky, *Die proletarische Revolution und ihr Programm*, Dietz Nachfolger, Stuttgart, 1922, pp. 2-3.

³ A comparison of Marx' and Kautsky's formulations is sufficient to show how the substitution was made.

"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat" (Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme", in: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 26).

"Between the purely bourgeois- and the purely proletarian-ruled democratic state there lies the period of the transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the government as a rule will be a form of coalition government" (Karl Kautsky, *op. cit.*, p. 106).

It would seem to be a simple substitution of words, but in fact it is a complete rejection of revolutionary proletarian politics and its replacement by reformist conciliation with the bourgeoisie.

tion of the key industries". At the same time it (like the SPD) rejected a united front with the Communist Party, declaring that unity of the proletariat could only be restored on a centrist programme.

The working class's gravitation toward united action, however, often proved stronger than party decisions and broke through spontaneously. Thus, protest against the terrorist acts of the extreme nationalists, one of whose victims in August 1921 had been the prominent bourgeois-republican politician Matthias Erzberger, brought all the workers' parties and organisations together in joint mass demonstrations, demanding defence of the Republic against reaction's attacks.¹ Organisational unity was achieved from time to time in the industrial councils (factory committees), in which Communists were able to win strong positions. In Berlin these committees even set up "a commission of six" from members of the three parties, which performed the role of an instrument of the united front of revolutionary workers.²

From the end of 1921 the strike struggle became more intense. Demands for wage rises and defence of the eight-hour day were the primary demands. Wages were not keeping pace with the rise of prices for basic foodstuffs (in January 1922 they were 28 times higher than prewar, in February 34 times, in March 36 times, and in April 42 times). A strike of railway workers in early February 1922 involved nearly 800,000; it was a very big action by government employees, and affected the whole country. President Ebert banned the strike, and the leaders of the trade unions called for its ending. The Reichswehr and police were thrown against the strikers, and their leaders arrested. Only the KPD supported the strikers. In April the metal workers of South Germany went on strike; 160,000 workers were involved; and the dispute lasted three months and ended in a compromise. Agricultural workers also struck in Thüringen, Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg, and Pomerania.³ But the absence of unity of action of the various sections of the working-class movement had a distinct slowing effect on the struggle.

The working class of *France* continued a defensive struggle, but suffered setbacks more and more often. The workers' standard of living began to fall in 1921. The bourgeoisie passed to a broad offensive against the working class and the Millerand Government resorted to searches, arrests, and police persecution (especially of Communists and revolutionary syndicalists). The situation was made worse by the fact that the reformist leadership of the General Confederation

¹ W. Ruge, *Matthias Erzberger*, Berlin, 1976.

² *Communists of Western Europe in the Struggle for a United Proletarian Front*, pp. 115-17, 129-30.

³ *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Chronik*, Part 2, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1966, pp. 122-26.

of Labour (CGT), led by Léon Jouhaux, took an active part in this victimisation. The persecution acquired a mass character after the CGT Congress in Lille in July 1911, at which the revolutionary opposition, led by Pierre Sébard and Gaston Monmousseau got nearly half of the votes (1,348 against 1,556). In federations and departments where reformists had a majority, they simply expelled members of the opposition and whole trade unions; where they were in the minority, they themselves left the organisation and founded new ones.

In spite of this repressive practice the revolutionary syndicalists continued to work for unity of the CGT. But the leadership, having turned down all their proposals, announced the CGT's affiliation to the Amsterdam International and banned members from joining the Profintern. At the end of 1921 the split in the French unions became a fact; and in June 1922, at a congress in Saint-Étienne, a Unitarian General Confederation of Labour (CGTU) was founded, uniting 360,000 members of revolutionary unions (the CGT was left with 373,000 members). The anarchosyndicalists who headed the CGTU, however, resisted affiliating to the Profintern. The organisation only did so after Sébard and Monmousseau, with Lenin's support, reached agreement with the leadership of the Profintern on removing the clause from the Rules of the Profintern about its close organisational link with the Comintern.¹

The Communist Party was very heterogeneous in composition, including both experienced old Socialists and young people who had passed through the school of the trenches. Some lacked political experience, others were still under the persisting influence of reformist or anarchosyndicalist ideas. In addition to the proletarian core there were chance petty-bourgeois elements in the Party, attracted to its ranks during the years of revolutionary upsurge. That generated disagreements and factional struggle, which was aggravated by the fact that leadership was in the hands of a group headed by the centrist Frossard. The Federation of Communist Youth, for instance, proclaimed its "independence", issuing adventurist slogans of a "revolutionary uprising" and refusal of conscription. The Right, grouped around the papers *La Vague* and *Journal du peuple* (A. Fabre, V. Meric) insisted on co-operation with bourgeois parties. The Frossard group, manoeuvring skilfully, in essence sabotaged the political line of the Comintern. The internal tension weakened the Party and prevented it from developing work among the masses.²

The Party Congress in Marseilles on 25-30 December 1921, having

¹ A. Lozovsky, *Anarchosyndicalism and Communism*, Moscow, 1924, pp. 48-174, 254-55; see also *Reminiscences of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin*, Vol. 5, Moscow, 1979, pp. 476-77 (both in Russian).

² Z.V. Chernukha, *The Founding of the French Communist Party*, Moscow, 1976, pp. 107-10, 133 (in Russian).

repulsed the attack of the Right, passed a resolution on establishing links between the Party and trade unions. As the ECCI noted in its greetings, that was only the first step, however important. The Party should look for ways of uniting with the revolutionary syndicalists, have friendly discussions with them, but "must not encourage syndicalist prejudices against parties and against political action".¹ The Congress adopted theses on the agrarian question drafted by the Central Committee, which were approved of in principle by Lenin, who supported the idea that it was necessary to have a "programme of transitional measures" that could ensure peasants' voluntary passage to socialised farming and at the same time immediately improve the position of the majority of hired labourers and small peasants. The immediate application of "*integral communism to small-peasant farming* (by no means in France only, but in all countries where small-peasant husbandry exists) would be a *profound error*".² Lenin's comments contained an essential refinement and new propositions that were taken into consideration by the French Communists.

Lenin's support was all the more important since there were advocates of expropriation of petty proprietors among the delegates, who ignored the significance of an alliance of workers and peasants. The slogan adopted by the Congress "The Land for Those Who Till It" corresponded to Marxian principles and tactics, and made allowance for the role of petty landed proprietorship traditional in France.

Among the questions discussed at the congress was that of the bourgeoisie's imperialist policy, which unleashed the world war. The theses adopted stressed the service of the Bolsheviks, who had exposed the imperialist character of the war and unmasked the adventurist, aggressive foreign policy of the French bourgeoisie and its predatory colonial activity. On the whole the resolutions of the Marseilles Congress helped the Party to master the principles of proletarian internationalism, and were an important step in the difficult business of converting the Party into a truly Communist one capable of directing the revolutionary struggle of the working class and its allies.

The Socialists, after their withdrawal from the Tours Congress, revived the SFIO under the motto of loyalty to "the old home". It now had around 30,000 members, and the majority of the MPs (55 of

¹ *The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents*, Vol. 1 (1919-1922), O.U.P., London, 1956, p. 305.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Theses on the Agrarian Question Adopted by the Communist Party of France", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 131, 135. These comments were published over the signature "A Russian Communist" in *The Communist International*, No. 20, 1922.

the Socialist members of the Chamber of Deputies out of 68), a considerable proportion of the Socialist members of departmental and municipal councils, and mayors. At their Congress in Paris in October-November 1921 (the Nineteenth Congress of the SFIO), two trends were manifested: a right-wing one led by Pierre Renaudel and a centrist one headed by Paul Faure, Jean Longuet, and Léon Blum. The Party was mainly oriented on parliamentary activity, discussed the possibility of a "left bloc" with bourgeois parties, and maintained close contact with the reformist leadership of the CGT.¹

In *Great Britain* the capitalists had succeeded, with the aid of the government, in smashing the organised resistance of the working class by traditional methods. The workers, demoralised by the defeat of the miners and the actions of their opportunist leaders, continued their economic struggle, but had only limited success. While 24.3 per cent of the strikes in 1920 had ended in the workers' favour, and 31.5 per cent in the employers', the ratio was quite different in 1921 (19.9 and 41.3 per cent), and in 1922 (19.3 and 38.5 per cent).² The engineering workers' big strike in the spring of 1922 and the London dockers' strike in the summer of 1923 did not alter the general picture of standstill in the proletarian struggle. Militant moods had given way to bewilderment, apathy, and lack of confidence in their own strength. There was a steep fall in membership of trade unions (from 8,300,000 in 1920 to 5,400,000 in 1923).³ The creation of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in the autumn of 1922 in place of its Parliamentary Committee was a step toward forming a co-ordinating centre but, because of the resistance of the leaders of the big unions, the General Council did not get sufficient rights to lead the whole trade union movement.

In those unfavourable circumstances the initiative in the struggle to tackle the pressing problems of the trade union movement and unite all the workers was taken by the Communist Party of Great Britain and the Communist-led British Bureau of the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU, or Profintern). They issued the slogan "Back to the Unions", called for a six-hour day for miners, the fixing of a national minimum wage, work or full maintenance for the unemployed at the expense of the government and employers, and affiliation of the TUC to the RILU. The conferences held in 1922 under the auspices of the British Bureau of the RILU were attended by 905 delegates representing more than a million organised workers. The CPGB's persistent work in the unions led to the founding in the autumn of 1923 of the National Minority Movement,

¹ S.N. Gurvich, *The Working-Class Movement and the Left Bloc in France*, Moscow, 1966, pp. 30-31 (in Russian).

² *Eighteenth Abstract of Labour Statistics*, HMSO, London, p. 148.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

which became the conduit of a left, militant policy in the reformist unions and involved nearly 20 per cent of their members.¹

The founding of an organisation of the unemployed was another considerable achievement of the CPGB. In the winter of 1920/21 various organisations of unemployed workers had sprung up in several towns, which were mainly concerned with collecting funds to support their members. In April 1921 the National Unemployed Workers' Committee Movement was founded; by November it had 140 local branches, with around 200,000 members. It held meetings and demonstrations and sent delegations to public organisations and government institutions, organised picketing of factories that were on strike, and fought against strikebreakers. Its biggest action was the Hunger March of the unemployed to London from October 1922 to February 1923, in which around 2,000 marchers took part, covering nearly 480 miles all in all. In London they were met by a demonstration of some 70,000 supporters.² The Hunger March did not force the Government to help the hundreds of thousands of unemployed, but it did bring their needs to the attention of the organised labour movement. In September 1923 the TUC officially recognised the National Unemployed Workers' Committee Movement.³

The CPGB continued to fight for affiliation to the Labour Party as a collective member, seeing in that a road to the masses. Although three annual conferences of the Labour Party turned down the application in 1921, 1922, and 1923, the Communists, while criticising its reformist ideology and policy, at the same time helped Labour in its fight against the bourgeois parties, striving to promote its conversion into a real instrument of social progress.⁴

In the *United States* the monopolies carried out an offensive against the working class, employing mainly economic levers to intensify exploitation, viz., intensification of work, wage cuts, and lengthening of the working day. A campaign against the unions was developed under the watchword of the "open shop". William Z. Foster, who joined the Communist Party in 1921, wrote that the capitalist class had become particularly aggressive and was "determined to root out every vestige of Organised Labour. The 'open shop' employers have dealt the unions shattering blows in practically every industry."⁵ The campaign of legal persecution acquired a broad scale and permanent character, banning or restricting various forms of union

¹ James Klugmann, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain*, Vol. 1, pp. 112-13, 115.

² James Klugmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-26.

³ L.J. MacFarlane, *The British Communist Party*, London, 1966, p. 127.

⁴ I.N. Undasynov, *Communists and the Labour Party. 1919-1923*, Moscow, 1979, pp. 170-91 (in Russian).

⁵ Wm. Z. Foster, *The Bankruptcy of the American Labor Movement*, The T.U. Educational League, Chicago, 1922, p. 61.

action (by injunctions). Political repression aimed at workers, progressive intellectuals, immigrants, and Black Americans was cloaked by propaganda of "Americanism".

The working class's will to resist was not, however, broken. The biggest sections—the miners and the railroad workers—continued organised struggle. On 1 April 1922, 600,000 miners stopped work, protesting against a wage cut, and demanding a six-hour day and five-day week. The companies and government used thousands of strikebreakers, instituted states of emergency in a number of localities, and provoked armed clashes. The mine-owners were ultimately forced to sign a compromise agreement with the union. A well-organised strike of 400,000 railroad workers began in the summer and had great repercussions, though it was weakened by the antagonisms between the craft brotherhoods. When the miners' strike was ended, pressure was increased on the railroad workers. The Attorney General accused them of waging "civil war". The fight ended unsuccessfully for the workers.¹

American workers were forced to fight in complicated conditions. The leaders of the AFL openly sabotaged the most important strikes, disrupted solidarity actions, and rejected all proposals to amalgamate unions. Their policy, as Foster put it, was one of retreat, "each for himself and the devil take the hindmost". The utter surrender of the reactionary union leaders was consolidated by their disastrous "Baltimore and Ohio plan", which envisaged, in particular, "purging" of the railroad unions of workers unwilling to co-operate with the companies.² "Company unions" quickly sprang up everywhere. By the end of 1922 they had half a million members. Workers were persuaded to agree to rationalisation, and to raise productivity, by propaganda for the idea of management-participation and profit-sharing through their acquisition of a few shares. The union leaders' surrender in the face of capital's onslaught cost the trade union movement dear. Railroad brotherhoods and the AFL were losing their members. Thus, membership of the AFL fell from four million in 1920 to less than three million in 1923; only around 15 per cent of the industrial workers were left in its ranks.³

The fight of the American working class suffered from its lack of political organisation and ideological weakness. Given unending police raids on "Reds", race conflicts and lynching of Blacks, anti-labour and anti-socialist hysteria, judicial despotism, and the brutal

¹ Anthony Bimba, *The History of the American Working Class*, International Publishers, New York, 1927, pp. 299-305; *Recent History of the US Labour Movement*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1970, pp. 81-83 (in Russian).

² William Z. Foster, *Outline History of the World Trade Union Movement*, International Publishers, New York, 1956, pp. 258, 282.

³ *Recent History of the US Labour Movement*, Vol. I, pp. 77-78.

treatment of capital's prisoners (Eugene Debs, Tom Mooney, Warren Billings, Bill Haywood, and many others), it was extremely difficult to build a revolutionary proletarian party linked with the masses. During a raid in Michigan William Z. Foster and 19 workers were gaoled. The Workers Defense Council, appealing to the friends of unions and all liberals, wrote that this latest raid was part and parcel of the all-American plot to smash the trade unions which had brought Tom Mooney to the edge of the gallows and held Sacco and Vanzetti under threat of the electric chair, to say nothing of hundreds of others languishing in dirty dungeons in many states so that the freedoms of the nation were in jeopardy.¹

American democratic circles repeatedly tried to found their own political organisations to express their interests, which the two main bourgeois parties only remembered in their election platforms. During the war a Labor Non-Partisan League had arisen, based on the farmers and establishing links with the railroad brotherhoods. In 1920 the Farmer-Labor Party arose from the National Workers' Party. It had some success in elections, but went downhill soon.

The basis for a progressive anti-monopoly movement grew, under the impact of the people's mounting dissatisfaction with the policy of the bourgeois parties. Early in 1922 an attempt was made to unite all the democratic forces on a national scale; a Corporation for Progressive Political Action was founded on the initiative of the railroad brotherhoods as an all-American federation of unions, farmers' organisations, and other mass organisations, with around three million members. At its conventions in February and December 1922 a reform programme was adopted aimed at limiting the power of the monopolies and democratising the political system. But the unity achieved proved to be unstable and was virtually broken down the next year.²

The Communist Party of America, which was forced to work underground, was also seeking a way to the masses of the working people. In 1921 it drafted a plan to found a parallel legal party. Lenin, who met the American delegation at the Third Congress of the Comintern, approved of this idea. The Central Executive Committee of the CPA, overcoming the resistance of the sectarian minority, managed to unite the legal American Federation of Labor with the Labor Council that had split off from the Socialist Party. At the end of 1921 the American Workers' Party was founded at a congress in New York. The newspaper *The Worker* became its organ; Charles E. Ruthenberg, who was then in prison, was elected secretary. The Party's programme spoke of the need to lead the workers' struggle for their everyday

¹ *Progressive America in Struggle. 1917-1973. Documents and Materials*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 141-42 (in Russian).

² *Recent History of the US Labour Movement*, Vol. I, pp. 99-114.

needs, defended labour unions, the right to strike and picket, and the rights of Blacks, called on the unions to join the Profintern, condemned "double unionism" (i.e. the founding of parallel unions in one industry), and came out for unity of action of industrial workers and working farmers and agricultural workers.¹

The Workers' Party's co-operation with the Trade Union Educational League founded by William Z. Foster in 1920 played a major role in extending its practical ties with the mass labour movement. The agitational and propaganda activity of the League as an organised bloc of left progressive forces within the traditional unions took the line of uniting the unorganised workers and drawing them into the unions (both those affiliated to the AFL and independent ones), consolidating the trade union movement by founding unions of an industrial type through the amalgamation of existing union organisations and elimination of the craft barriers between them, building an independent mass Farmer-Labor Party, and campaigning for US recognition of Soviet Russia. An indication of the League's growing influence was recognition of the principle of amalgamation of unions by 16 international and national unions, 17 state federations, and many union branches, representing more than two million organised workers, i.e. around half of all union members.² For the first time an organised opposition of rank-and-file workers to the dominance of the reactionary union bureaucracy took shape in the USA.

THE TACTICS OF THE WORKERS' UNITED FRONT

After its Third Congress the Communist International tried not to miss a single chance to rally the proletariat and all working people internationally. When Soviet Russia suffered a terrible natural calamity—drought and famine—the ECCI, the Executive Bureau of the RILU, and the Executive Committee of the Communist Youth International called on the workers of all lands and all international organisations to provide urgent famine relief.³ In the autumn of 1921 the ECCI and Executive Bureau of the RILU appealed to the Executive Committee of the Amsterdam International for joint action against white terror in Yugoslavia and Spain. The letter expressed confidence that there could be no difference of opin-

¹ O.I. Kurochkina, "The Third Congress of the Comintern and the Establishment of the Communist Movement in the USA". In *The Third Congress of the Comintern*, Moscow, 1975, pp. 490-95 (in Russian).

² Wm. Z. Foster, *American Trade Unionism. Principles and Organization, Strategy and Tactics*, New York, 1947, p. 82.

³ For further details see Chapter 11.

ion as far as the struggle against the butchers of the Spanish and Yugoslav proletariat was concerned. However, the proposal to hold a special meeting to discuss the forms, methods, and means of combating the governments of both these countries, was left unanswered.¹

The line of the ECCI on the united front was still only taking shape. Doubts and waverings about the content and forms of these new tactics arose both in the separate parties and among some of the Comintern's leaders, which was not surprising, since memories were still fresh of the action of the right-wing Social-Democratic leaders who had directly assumed the role of stranglers of the revolutionary workers in Germany and Hungary, and indirectly in other countries. Since communist parties had been born, as a rule, in very bitter struggle, many Communists considered not only the leaders but also the rank-and-file members of socialist parties and trade unions their enemies.

The main focus of opposition to the united front, however, was not at the bottom of the parties; on the contrary, natural, spontaneous desire for unity markedly increased among the broad masses of the working class. The new line was mainly opposed by right-wing reformist leaders of Social-Democracy, and of the unions linked with them. Within the communist movement those circles of "Left"-minded leaders who did not understand that conditions had changed, and that the fight to win over the masses was imperative and called for new methods, opposed united actions with reformists.

Some communist leaders regarded the slogan of united action as no more than a propaganda "manoeuvre" to expose Social-Democratic and trade union leaders. In some of the ECCI's documents of the time, too, the leaders of international reformist organisations were often labelled "social traitors" alongside calls for "unity of the world proletariat", and the disagreements between the Second and the Vienna Internationals were described as a comedy or as a semblance of fighting between Siamese twins. An appeal exposing Yugoslav centrists, for example, said that the Vienna International was playing the "role of police agent".² It was inconceivable to achieve unity of action without overcoming such exaggerations.

Lenin understood that it was a long and complicated business to win the masses and a majority of the proletariat to the side of communism. He saw it not as a precondition or *sine qua non* of the building of a united front, but rather as a more or less distant result. He therefore called for "more thorough and careful preparations for it", without missing a single real chance when "the bourgeoisie compels

¹ *The Activity of the ECCI*, p. 282.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 71, 186, 190 *et al.*

the proletariat to undertake a struggle". It was particularly important, he wrote, to learn how to determine the moment correctly when "the masses of the proletariat *cannot but* rise together with us".¹ He thus refused to understand winning over of the majority in a formal way (citing as an example the partial, fleeting, local but still winning of the masses in the spontaneous demonstration of the proletarians of Rome against the fascists in July 1921).

On 1 December 1921 the Politbureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee considered the initiative of the Russian delegation in the ECCI, which had proposed that communist parties appeal to the workers of the Second International for joint actions. This initiative was approved in a decision drafted by Lenin. The delegation was instructed to draft theses, and Bukharin, in addition, to publish an article about the Bolsheviks' experience of fighting the Mensheviks and of the blocs between them (for which Lenin sent him his own notes).² A special commission of the ECCI (Varga, Kuusinen, and others) drafted a paper on the tax burden in capitalist countries and the workers' urge to unity, which contained a recommendation not to be confused by the dual or even reformist character of separate concrete demands so long as they could unite the broad masses.³ The Secretariat of the ECCI sent a request to all communist parties to gather concrete data concerning transitional demands.⁴

The draft of the theses prepared by the Russian delegation was discussed at a session of the ECCI on 4 December 1921. Zinoviev (the reporter) noted the natural striving of the working class for a united front and the evidence of left moods in the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals. In substantiation of the tactic of the united front he quoted Lenin's view that it would help certain strata of the working class that were being drawn into politics for the first time to get rid of their reformist illusions by their own experience. He supported the tactic of the KPD aimed at achieving unity of action, and noted that the Italian Communist Party, though suffering from doctrinairism, had half-consciously, instinctively put forward the watchword of a united front in the fight against fascism, while in France and Czechoslovakia, where the majority of the organised workers followed the Communists, the negative attitude toward that watchword had not been overcome.⁵

¹ V.I. Lenin, "A Letter to the German Communists", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 522.

² V.I. Lenin, "Draft Decision of the Politbureau of the C.C. R.C.P.(B.) on the Tactics of the United Front", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 367.

³ Yu.L. Molchanov, *The Comintern: at the Sources of the Policy of the United Proletarian Front*, Moscow, 1969, p. 116 (in Russian).

⁴ *The Activity of the ECCI*, p. 324.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 333-43.

It became clear during the discussion that the "Left" critics had not laid down their weapons. Bukharin, for instance, claimed that the new stage should not be considered a long-term one and the partial demands, the programme of this stage, because another stage could set in "in a few days" and the tactics would have to be altered. What would happen, for example, he asked, if a positive reply were received to the proposal for joint struggle? In such an eventuality, he considered, Communists would have "to try and seize the leadership and most important strategic positions". Encouraged by that approach, the representatives of the "Left" from France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Switzerland began to oppose the united front in their own countries, so that Bukharin was forced to justify himself; he was not, he claimed, an opponent in general of the new line, but was only cautioning against treating it as "a long-term programme". Wherever fascists were shooting workers, and wherever the situation was becoming hot, there were plenty of grounds for saying to all the workers: "Let's fight this rabble together."¹

S. A. Lozovsky, Mátyás Rákosi, Otto Ström, and others supported the theses, but Bukharin's claim that the main line of the tactic was "branding and attacking" social-reformist parties found an echo in Zinoviev's summing up, in which he suggested that the tone of the polemic was still not sharp enough and should be made more pointed.²

Lenin saw the draft theses on December 6. Their main propositions did not evoke any objections; he only suggested supplementing and amending the section on the experience of Bolshevism.³ On December 18 the ECCI, after a short debate, unanimously approved the theses on the workers' united front and the attitude to workers belonging to the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Amsterdam Internationals, and to workers supporting anarcho-syndicalist organisations. At the end of December the 11th All-Russia Conference of the RCP(B) adopted these theses, which facilitated confirmation of the new tactic in the Comintern.⁴ The theses and the appeal of the ECCI and the Executive Bureau of the Profintern explaining them were published early in 1922.⁵

Lenin's main idea of the need for Communists to win the support of the broadest masses of the working class and other working people,

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 346-47.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 348-49, 352, 354.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Remarks to the Theses on a United Front", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 368.

⁴ *The CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 2, p. 291. For further details see V. V. Alexandrov, *Lenin and the Comintern. From the History of the Development of the Theory and Tactics of the International Communist Movement*, Moscow, 1972, pp. 423-25 (in Russian).

⁵ *The Activity of the ECCI*, pp. 375-77.

and to develop and consolidate these ties continually, especially at historical turning points, was developed concretely in these documents, which defined the basic principles of the policy of the united front as follows.

Communists should strive in all circumstances "to achieve the broadest and most complete unity possible on *practical action*" of the workers, and to that end make concrete agreements with other organisations of the working class, including reformist and anarcho-syndicalist ones, both locally and nationally and on an international scale.

Communist parties making agreements with reformist organisations should remain faithful to the principles of revolutionary Marxism, remain independent ideologically, and in no case should renounce making known their views and criticisms of the opponents of communism. They should retain organisational independence, resolutely fight "the dissolution of communist parties and groups into the united but formless bloc", and should refuse terms that would put them in an unequal position vis-à-vis the other organisations joining the united front.

Communist parties should join a united front in accordance with the workers' desire for unity of action and so as to strengthen the masses' resistance to capitalism, raise their class consciousness during the class struggle, and overcome illusions of reformism and conciliation with the bourgeoisie and in order to mobilise the masses ultimately for the fight to abolish reaction and capitalism. Communist parties should turn their main attention in the united front to unity of the masses themselves in the practical struggle, since only unity of the masses ensured a real united front. When reformist leaders refused a united front communist parties should expose them, and explain to the masses who were the real disrupters of workers' unity.

To achieve agreement on unity of action Communists should put forward immediate direct demands that were common to workers of all political trends and capable of really uniting the workers' struggle; as the united front developed Communists must gradually extend the struggle and raise it to a higher level.¹

The theses stressed that Communists should not only "*support the slogan of the united front of the workers*" but also take the initiative in building it, and communist parties' tactics should necessarily be made more concrete in accordance with the situation in each country.

The drafters of the theses, having considered the possibilities of a united front in various countries, reminded all fraternal parties

¹ *The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents*, Vol. 1, Oxford University Press, London, 1956, pp. 307-15.

in particular of the Russian experience. On Lenin's advice it was noted that the Bolsheviks, while constantly fighting the Mensheviks, had also repeatedly concluded agreements with them. It was in the course of that struggle that the workers tested the leaders' actions, so that the vast majority of the best worker-Mensheviks were gradually won over to communism.¹ The Comintern, the theses said, must also make agreements on an international scale. Moreover, "though the leaders of the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Amsterdam Internationals reject one or another practical proposal put forward by the Communist International that will not persuade us to give up the united front tactic, which has deep roots in the masses and which we must systematically and steadily develop".²

The appeal for a workers' united front, issued by the ECCI and the Executive Bureau of the Profintern on 1 January 1922, spoke of the need to establish a united front of all the parties basing themselves on the proletariat, regardless of their disagreements, insofar as they were prepared to work together for the immediate needs of the proletariat.³ Appealing to the men and women workers belonging to reformist and anarchosyndicalist organisations, the appeal said: "All right, you do not yet dare to take up the fight for the new, the struggle for power, for the dictatorship, with arms in hand; you are not ready to launch the great offensive on the citadels of world reaction. But at least rally to the fight for bare life, for bread, for peace. Rally for these, struggle in one fighting front... Tear down the barriers erected between you and come into the ranks, whether communist or social-democrat, anarchist or syndicalist, to fight for the needs of the hour."⁴

In a letter of 10 January to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany, the ECCI gave an extensive interpretation of several important aspects of the united front policy. It was necessary, it said, to try and unite all sections of the working class that were ready to struggle, i.e. not just Communists and Social-Democrats, but also the millions of non-party and Christian workers. Disputes about whether the common front should be formed *from above*, through agreement of parties, or *from below*, through strengthening the masses' struggle, were "sheer doctrinairism". Without the latter method the former was impossible, while the former made the latter easier. The more clearly we show the masses that in spite of all the crimes of Noskes and his like we are ready to sit down at the negotiations table with the Social-Democrats, the easier it will

¹ V.I. Lenin and the Communist International, pp. 408-12.

² The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents, Vol. 1, p. 316.

³ V.I. Lenin and the Communist International, p. 414.

⁴ The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents, Vol. 1, p. 318.

be to remove the obstacles in a united proletarian front, the letter said.

It stated in so many words that they were unsure whether the united front motto was a deviation from their direct fight for the dictatorship. And the reply to this was in the true Leninist spirit: the fight for the dictatorship was inconceivable so long as the mass of the proletariat, the vast majority had not joined hands in the firm resolve to fight the bourgeoisie. Such determination could arise only if the workers tried all democratic ways and all types of partial struggle to find that there was no other way but communism. For the Communist Party to become the leader of the proletariat it must, fighting the workers' battle, pass all the intermediate stages and remain true to the proletarian and to its own banner. The party must have the courage to take the responsibility for all that is needed by the working class, even the transient needs, such as a workers' government.¹

THE CONFERENCE OF THE THREE INTERNATIONALS

Not only Communists began to show an interest in solidarity actions by the proletariat on both the national and the international scale but also to some extent Social-Democrats and reformist trade unionists. They were being pushed to this by the initiative of communist organisations but even more by the strengthening of the capitalists' attack on workers' living conditions and political rights, the upsurge of fascist movements, and the sharpening of inter-imperialist contradictions in Europe associated with the growth of armaments and fraught with danger of a new war.

In the summer of 1921 the British Labour Party—the buttress of the Second International—proposed to the parties of the latter, and of the Vienna International, to convene an international conference to consider the possibilities of unification. The centrist leaders of the Vienna International agreed to begin negotiations, but the idea of holding such a conference under the auspices of the Second International did not appeal to them, since the latter had compromised itself in the eyes of many workers. They also prized the aura of “revolutionariness”, which they retained with difficulty, and were convinced that only they could take on the role of “intermediaries” between the Second and Third Internationals in order to unite the broad proletarian masses, and even to win them away from the Communists. The Executive Committee of the Vienna International therefore, having turned down the proposal for a unification conference in

¹ *The Activity of the ECCI*, pp. 432-34.

October 1921, suggested that joint international actions be organised first.¹

The problem of united actions of the working class also came up at the Congress of the SFIO in Paris. The leader of the USPD, Georg Ledebour, speaking as a fraternal delegate, noted the possibility of common actions of the three Internationals. He was supported, with reservations, by the centrist group of the SFIO. The Italian Socialist Party, which did not belong to any of the Internationals, also soon came out in favour of an international discussion of urgent economic and political issues. The idea was supported by the Austrian Socialists, and then also by the leaders of the USPD. In November 1921, the international conference of the influential unions of the transport workers, miners, and metal workers, held in Amsterdam, expressed the workers' alarm in regard to the danger of a new war, and proposed setting up a united organisation under the auspices of the Amsterdam International to fight militarism.² The leaders of that International put forward a plan for international discussion of reparations policy, which envisaged settling the disputes by arbitration through the League of Nations. The Bureau of the Vienna International agreed to call a European conference of workers' parties for the purpose.³

The programmatic statements on the united front published by the Comintern and Profintern showed the leaders of the Vienna International that they had lost the initiative. Hardly had it become known that the Entente Prime Ministers had decided to hold an international economic conference in Genoa with the participation of Soviet Russia, than the Vienna International's Bureau adopted an appeal at its session in Berlin on 14-15 January 1922. Recognising that "the will for unification of the international actions of the working class has grown more quickly and strongly than expected in recent weeks" so that "establishment of the proletarian united front is the demand of the day", the Bureau proposed negotiations in Moscow and London on convening a general conference of all workers' parties in the spring of 1922.⁴ On January 19 Friedrich Adler informed the Executive Committees of the Second and Third Internationals of this. The Presidium of the ECCI replied in two days that it considered it necessary to accept the invitation in principle,

¹ Yu. L. Molchanov, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-32.

² *The Communist International*, No. 19, 1921, pp. 4785-86.

³ This conference was held in January-February 1922, and formulated a reparations policy which was essentially that of Amsterdam (see L. Lorwin, *Labor and Internationalism*, MacMillan, New York, 1929, p. 236).

⁴ *Freiheit*, 17 January 1922 (morning edition); Arnold Reisberg, *An den Quellen der Einheitsfrontpolitik*, Vol. 1, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1971, p. 353; Vol. 2, p. 750; Yu. L. Molchanov, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

and that it would "put the proposal on the agenda of an enlarged Executive Committee".¹

Lenin gave much time to preparation of the conference of the three Internationals. Foreseeing that even a preliminary conference with Social-Democratic leaders, shrewd, experienced tacticians, would be a complicated business, he advised the leaders of the ECCI to "consider beforehand what people, preferably those with a ready tongue, are going to represent the Comintern at the conference with the II and the II 1/2 Internationals. We must also consider beforehand the basic questions of tactics and strategy to be employed at this meeting."² Lenin concretised and developed certain propositions of the united front policy. Thus, when referring to certain Communists who reduced proposals for unity of action simply to a tactic meant to expose reformist leaders, he suggested methods for getting real agreement: when calling the masses to practical actions there should be flexibility in negotiations with the reformist leaders and one should begin with a little. In a letter of 1 February 1922 he advised the ECCI delegation to propose for discussion "only questions that have a direct bearing on practical joint action by the working masses and touching on matters that are recognised as indisputable in the official press statements of each of the three participants".³ If the negotiating partners brought up contentious issues, e.g. about the Mensheviks and Georgia,⁴ it was necessary to have counter-questions ready, viz., about the renegade attitude of Social-Democrats to the Basle manifesto, the responsibility of Social-Democratic leaders for the murder of Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, and other Communists, the attitude to murders of revolutionaries in colonies, and so on.⁵

Lenin's hypothesis proved correct. In fact, at the separate meetings of leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals in Paris and Frankfurt-on-Main, the former put forward preliminary conditions for their participation in the conference, viz., Soviet Russia's renunciation of its decision to punish Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries,⁶ discussion of the Georgian question, and liquidat-

¹ *The Activity of the ECCI*, p. 437.

² V.I. Lenin, "Letter to N.I. Bukharin and G.Y. Zinoviev", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 393.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ The Social-Democratic leaders were demanding "self-determination" for Georgia, by which they meant annulment of the treaty of alliance between the Georgian SSR and the RSFSR concluded after the overthrow of the Menshevik government in Georgia and the establishment of Soviet rule there.

⁵ V.I. Lenin, "Letter to N.I. Bukharin...", *op. cit.*, pp. 393-94.

⁶ In connection with the publication of the GPU's decision on 28 February 1922 to put a group of leading Socialist-Revolutionaries on trial before the Supreme Revolutionary Tribunal for terrorist struggle against Soviet power,

ion of communist groups in trade unions. In the end they only agreed to a preliminary meeting of representatives of the three Executive Committees, at which they wanted to raise all these questions. The leaders of the Vienna International yielded. The ECCI was sent an invitation to send ten of its members to Berlin on 26 February.¹

Meanwhile the *first extended plenary meeting of the ECCI* was from 24 February to 4 March 1922 in Moscow, for which delegations had arrived from the communist parties of 36 countries, plus representatives of the Profintern, CYI, and other organisations. The plenary meeting discussed the situation in many parties, but the tactics of the united front were the central issue. The discussion lasted three days; Lenin could not make a report because of illness. When he read the draft resolution on participation in the conference of the three Internationals he advised, on 23 February, stressing more strongly that unity of action of the working class on pressing practical issues could be achieved *in spite of* radical political differences. He proposed a number of amendments to the meeting's draft resolution so as not to jeopardise the very possibility of agreement. "My chief amendment," he wrote, "is aimed at deleting the passage which calls the leaders of the II and II 1/2 Internationals accomplices of the world bourgeoisie". It was quite unreasonable thereby "to risk wrecking an affair of tremendous practical importance".²

Lenin foresaw that issues of the tactics of the united front would cause disagreements at the plenary meeting. Indeed, the idea was firmly entrenched in the French Communist Party that it should be all the more careful about the united front since, in its opinion, the Socialist Party, which had no mass basis, could again become nearer to the masses.³ The united front had not even been put on the agenda of its Marseilles Congress; and the political resolution of the Congress said that "for the Communists of this country there is no possibility of a rapprochement with the dissident leaders allied with the bourgeoisie and the Government, or with the union leaders who have abandoned the class struggle".⁴ Recollection of the bitter and yet unfinished fight against opportunists prevented the French Communist Party from recognising the need to find ways for joint actions. In January 1922 an extended plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the PCF again turned down the tactic of a united front, several leaders of the Second and Vienna Internationals, including Vandervelde, sent telegrams of protest against the allegedly foreordained death sentences.

¹ Arnold Reisberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 363.

² V.I. Lenin, "Letter to Members of the Politbureau of the C.C., R.C.P. (B.) with Remarks to the Draft Resolution for the First Extended Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive on Participation in a Conference of the Three Internationals", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 400.

³ *The Activity of the ECCI*, p. 357.

⁴ *L'Humanité*, 31 December 1921.

with one dissentient, declaring: "We will never march with traitors".¹

In Italy the increase in the fascist danger could have been a powerful stimulus to creation of the united proletarian front recommended by the Comintern, but it did not happen. Lenin had pointed out the need for a political bloc between the revolutionary and reformist stream even before the formation of the Communist Party. On the eve of the Livorno Congress he advised the Italian comrades to dissociate themselves from Turati and then conclude an alliance with him.² That laconically expressed the idea of the workers' united front, but Bordiga's leading group agreed only to a united front of various trade unions for the economic struggle, rejecting any co-operation of workers' parties.³ Francisco Misiano, a member of the leadership of the PCI, describing the growth of fascist terrorism at the session of the ECCI on 24 January 1922, tried to justify the Communists' "caution" in relation to the united front by their wishing to avoid everything that could help the Socialists gloss over the difference in the workers' eyes between them and the Communists. It would be "extremely dangerous" if that difference became obscure in circumstances when the influence of the Socialist Party (as he thought) was rapidly waning, and that of the Communist Party steadily increasing. He acknowledged the Communist Party's mistake in relation to the *arditi del popolo*. The ECCI advised the Italian Communists to give up their sectarian desire "to wave their own flag at any price" and to try, instead, to "form a united front at a time of mass movement".⁴ Citing the experience of the Bolsheviks' use even of the Zubatovites⁵, the ECCI advised the Communist Party of Italy to use every opportunity to get into direct contact with the masses of the workers, and to draw closer to them.⁶

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia linked the fight for partial and transient demands with the tasks of forming a united proletarian front, but (like the Communists in several other countries) it understood the latter as a form of uniting the working class around the

¹ *Internationale Pressekorrespondenz*, No. 13, 1922, p. 103.

² *Rinascita*, No. 16, 1956, p. 157.

³ *Il comunista*, 20 March 1921. Cited by N.P. Komolova in *Communists of Western Europe in the Struggle for a United Proletarian Front*, p. 210 (in Russian).

⁴ *The Activity of the ECCI*, pp. 442-44.

⁵ The Zubatovites were police-controlled legal workers' organisations in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kiev, and other cities, used by the tsarist government to combat the working-class movement in Russia in 1901-1903. They preached Bernsteinism and "economism" to divert workers from political struggle. The revolutionary Social-Democrats exposed their nature, the workers passed to political struggle, and the government dissolved the organisations (so-called after their initiator S.V. Zubatov).—Ed.

⁶ *The Militant Vanguard of the Working People of Italy*, Moscow, 1971, p. 47 (in Russian).

Communist Party, and did not even pose the question of joint actions of various proletarian organisations.¹

Lenin, realising that certain Communists' non-comprehension of the new policy of a united front would inevitably show itself at the plenary meeting of the ECCI, suggested that the Russian comrades explain thoroughly and in a popular manner (in particular to the French if they had "not yet grasped Marxist tactics"²) that Communists could only overcome the influence of the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals on the workers that way. He advised that it would be better not to strive to get unanimity on the resolution rather than "run the risk of spoiling a practical affair for the sake of a few political youngsters who tomorrow will be cured of their infantile disorder".³ His advice was taken.

In the report on the united front Zinoviev pursued the idea that this tactic did not mean mitigating the antagonism between revolutionaries and reformists, and that a long, stubborn struggle would have to be waged for unity of the worker masses themselves. A co-report from the French Communist Party (by Daniel Renault) defended the standpoint of its Central Committee, disputing that the resolution of the Third Congress of the Comintern had anticipated the policy of a united front. Renault spoke in favour of "revolutionary intransigence", and opposed a conference of the three Internationals and any idea of collaboration with Socialists. The co-report presented by the delegation from the Communist Party of Italy (Ricardo Roberto and Umberto Terracini) supported the tactic of the united front, but said that it needed to be pursued "without contacts with leaders who were guilty of betrayal and against whom there was a daily struggle". In the statements of certain "Lefts" there could even be detected the mistaken idea (widely employed by both "ultralefts" and imperialists) that agreement with reformists was allegedly dictated by the economic and political difficulties being experienced by Soviet Russia.

The majority of those at the plenary meeting (among them Wassil Kolaroff, Arthur MacManus, August Thalheimer, and others) exposed and rejected all the arguments of the opponents of the united front. A. V. Lunacharsky, in particular, said that the new tactical orientation had not been "invented" in Moscow but stemmed from the general international situation. Its aim was not collaboration with reformist leaders but the creation of a revolutionary movement whose aim and slogan would be understandable to "the humblest old woman worker in a textile mill". Only Trotsky expressed the dangerous

¹ F.I. Firsov, "Lenin, the Comintern, and the Formation of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia". In *The Third Congress of the Comintern...*, pp. 393-96.

² V.I. Lenin, "Letter to Members of the Politbureau...", *op. cit.* p. 401.

³ *Ibid.*

thought that the policy of the united front should not be employed in countries where the communist parties were very weak (Britain or Belgium) or were wholly dominant in the working class (Bulgaria). The representatives of Britain and Bulgaria did not support him.¹

By the end of the general discussion, and from private meetings, it became clear that the opponents of the united front had not changed their minds. On March 4 the plenary meeting's resolution was passed by 46 votes of 19 delegations for, and ten votes (of the delegations of France, Italy, and Spain) against.² This resolution confirmed the December theses, recommending application of the united front tactic, with due regard for the conditions in the individual countries. It was decided that the Comintern should take part in the proposed conference of all the workers' organisations of the world, whose aim should be "a single great task: to organise the working class's defensive struggle against international capital". It was stressed that those who, given capital's offensive and the growing danger of imperialist war, rejected a united front of all workers, in fact supported "a united front with the bourgeoisie against the workers".³ Following a report by Clara Zetkin, the plenary meeting also passed a resolution on the fight against war and the war danger.

This broad discussion of the united front problem helped overcome certain mistaken interpretations in communist parties. The line of the Third Congress was not only confirmed but made concrete. Lenin, speaking soon afterward at the 11th Congress of the RCP(B), noted that the workers could not cope with their tasks "unless they combine the ability to fight heroically and to attack with the ability to retreat in good revolutionary order".⁴ The Congress supported the tactics in a resolution on the report of the RCP(B) delegation to the Comintern. An addendum moved by Lenin clearly formulated "the purpose and sense of the tactics of the united front", which was to draw "more and more masses of the workers into the struggle against capital, even if it means making repeated offers to the leaders of the II and II 1/2 Internationals to wage this struggle together".⁵

¹ *Die Taktik der Kommunistischen Internationale gegen die Offensive des Kapitals. Bericht über die Konferenz der Erweiterten Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale, Moskau, vom 24. Februar bis 4. März 1922*, Verlag der Kommunistischen Internationale, Hamburg, 1922, pp. 48, 56-60, 64-66, 70, 78, 80, 90-91.

² After the voting the spokesmen of these three parties declared that they accepted the decision of the absolute majority.

³ *The Communist International in Documents, 1919-1932*, Moscow, 1933, pp. 260, 268-69 (in Russian).

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B), March 27-April 2, 1922, Speech in Closing the Congress, April 2", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 326.

⁵ V.I. Lenin, "Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), March 27-April 2, 1922. Proposal to the Draft Resolution on the Report of the R.C.P.(B.) Delegation in the Comintern", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 411.

The Congress expressed the hope that the leaders of those Internationals would not be able "to ruin the business of forming a united front of the workers of those countries where the continuing domination of the bourgeoisie is pushing all workers to unite against capital".¹

Having agreed to take part in the conference of representatives of the Executive Committees of the three Internationals in Berlin, the ECCI drafted detailed directives for its delegation,² commissioning it to take the initiative in convening a world workers' congress (or conference) with the broadest participation not only of the three Internationals, but also of the Amsterdamers, the Profintern, the anarchosyndicalists, the American Federation of Labor, and other organisations. In Lenin's view, they should not present its composition as an ultimatum. He also repeated his advice to try and put only the least contentious issues on the agenda for the conference, "with the aim of attempting partial, but joint *action*" by the masses of the workers³. The Politbureau's special directive demanded of the delegates "the greatest restraint in utterances and talks about the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries" and at the same time "the greatest distrust towards them".⁴

The delegation was to propose holding a world congress in Genoa or some other place, desirably already in April, so as to counterpose a united front of the international proletariat to the Genoa Economic Conference. It should recommend, as a first act of joint action, a one-day international strike to express the stand of the working class. On Lenin's advice the delegation should be "extremely discreet", as long as there was hope of getting a world congress, and should not break off negotiations without sending queries to Moscow, "unless it is something glaringly mean, *absolutely* intolerable".⁵

¹ *Eleventh Congress of the RCP(B). March-April 1922. Verbatim Report*, Moscow, 1961, p. 528 (in Russian).

² *Bericht über die Tätigkeit des Präsidiums und der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale für die Zeit vom 3. März bis 11. Juni 1922*, Verlag der Kommunistischen Internationale, Hamburg, 1922, pp. 3-5 (henceforth referred to as *Die Tätigkeit...*). The following were appointed to the delegation: Clara Zetkin, Karl Radek, N.I. Bukharin, Ludovico-Oscar Frossard, Alfred Rosmer, Amadeo Borgida, Bohumil Smeral, Adolf Warski, K. Nowakovich and Sen Katayama.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Letter to Members of the Politbureau of the C.C., R.C.P.(B.) with Proposals on the Draft Directives of the Comintern Executive for the Comintern Delegation to the Conference of the Three Internationals", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 407.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Letter to the Politbureau of the C.C., R.C.P.(B.) with a Draft of Directives to Comrades Travelling Abroad", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 408. Lenin had in mind here, in particular, Karl Radek, whose strong point was not "a *flair for diplomacy*".

⁵ V.I. Lenin, "Letter to Members of the Politbureau of the C.C. R.C.P.(B.) with Proposals on the Draft Directives of the Comintern Executive for the Comintern Delegation to the Conference of the Three Internationals", *op. cit.*, p. 407.

The conference opened in Berlin on 2 April 1922 after several delays. As expected, a bitter struggle developed. Ramsay MacDonald, who represented the Second International, had already said on the eve that there were no chances of successful co-operation with Communists. The leadership of the Amsterdam International again categorically rejected the proposal to sit at one table with representatives of the Profintern. The representatives of the Vienna International took on the role of "honest brokers".

The presiding committee of the conference consisted of Friedrich Adler, Clara Zetkin, and Tom Shaw. In his opening address Adler spoke of an attempt to reach not unity of the organisations but joint actions, and especially to counterpose "the modest collaboration of proletarian parties of various trends" to the "International of capitalist imperialism". Clara Zetkin read out a statement by the Communist International, which was couched in a businesslike tone and proposed the holding of a world workers' congress in the spirit of unity of action, regardless of differences of views about ways and means of attaining the final goal. The congress could discuss questions of repulsing the bourgeoisie's offensive, the fight against reaction, preparation of a struggle against new imperialist wars, help for the economic revival of Soviet Russia, and the Treaty of Versailles.¹

Vandervelde's speech was aggressive. While agreeing "in principle" with the calling of a congress, he emphasised that he was "mistrustful and apprehensive" about it. He rejected discussion of Versailles, accused the Comintern of insulting the leaders of the Second International, and demanded adoption of three preliminary conditions: "guarantees against attempts to form [communist—*Auth.*] cells in trade unions"; "guarantees of free representation" at the congress of Georgian Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, Armenian Dashnaks, and Ukrainian nationalists; "guarantees of the rights of the arrested" Socialist-Revolutionary terrorists in Moscow, and admission of representatives of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals to their trial as defence counsel. He also demanded the creation of an "atmosphere of confidence" in regard to leaders of Social-Democracy. The declaration of the Vienna International read out by Paul Faure also linked the convening of a workers' congress with meeting of these terms.

In his reply as spokesman of the ECCI, Karl Radek rebuffed the demands of these two Internationals but, disregarding Lenin's advice to be "extremely discreet" and the opinion of most of the members of the delegation, let himself use sharp expressions about social-reformist leaders. That enabled them immediately to put on

¹ *The International Socialist Conference (Joint Session of the Executive Committees of the Three Internationals). Verbatim Report, Moscow, 1922, pp. 7, 10, 13-15 (in Russian).*

a show of "indignation". Vandervelde demanded a suspension of deliberations until the matter of the expedience of their continuation had been settled.¹

The conference did not sit on April 3, but bitter debates continued behind the scenes. The delegation of the ECCI proposed, in a letter to the presiding committee, that the straight issue of whether they were prepared to take part in a world congress be put to all the delegations. A letter to the delegation of the Vienna International asked whether it held to its former position and intended to prevent a break-up of the meeting by the leaders of the Second International. The Vienna people worked to revive the proceedings.

At the session of April 4, MacDonald repeated Vandervelde's conditions in a rather moderated form. He even quoted Lenin's speeches to express the hope that they could "find a common basis and create a united front", but did not think it possible to convene a congress immediately. Serrati² objected sharply against setting preliminary conditions, stressing that they were intended simply to weaken Soviet Russia vis-à-vis the common enemy. Otto Bauer, having declared the demands of the Second International justified, at the same time considered that the convening of an international congress was more important than all doubts and conditions, and that those at the meeting had no right to disperse without having agreed, because that would cause "the proletariat of all countries, irrespective of parties, the most terrible disappointment and, on the other hand, would encourage the capitalist governments gathering in Genoa". Proposing that the congress be convened as quickly as possible, he supported the idea of the immediate holding of joint demonstrations against the imperialists' policy in connection with the forthcoming Genoa conference.³

During the discussion that followed, the ECCI delegation rejected the demands made to the Comintern and the Soviet government, agreed to the setting up of a commission of the three Executives to study the issues of Georgia and of Britain's attitude to revolutions (in Egypt, Ireland, and India). That did not go beyond the terms of its instructions, but it agreed, in addition, to intercede for admission of Vandervelde and other defence counsel to the trial of the Socialist-Revolutionary terrorists. Faced with the threat of a breakdown of negotiations they also gave an assurance that death sentences would not be imposed.⁴

On April 5, a declaration of the Berlin Conference was adopted,

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-20, 22-27.

² A delegation of the Italian Socialist Party was present without belonging to any one of the Internationals.

³ *The International Socialist Conference...*, pp. 29-34, 36, 40-45.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-20, 22-27.

after complicated disputes and negotiations. It said that the question of convening a world workers' congress (without trade unions) had been agreed "in principle". No date was fixed, but an organising committee, the Commission of Nine, was elected from members of the three Executive Committees. During the Genoa Conference (on April 20 or May 1) joint mass demonstrations were to be held under the watchwords: for an eight-hour day; against unemployment; for united actions of the proletariat against capital's offensive; for restoration of political and economic relations of all states with Soviet Russia and famine relief; for the creation of a united proletarian front in every country and on an international scale.¹ For all its limitations the basis was laid for further joint actions of the various contingents of the working class on burning practical issues. Everything now hung on the willingness of the participants in the conference of the Three Internationals to carry out its decisions.

In its report to the ECCI the Comintern delegation noted that everything positive that had been achieved had been linked with the formation of a "spontaneous bloc" with the delegation of the Vienna International. That had foiled the attempt of the representatives of the Second International to isolate the Comintern delegates.² Lenin thoroughly analysed the results of the Berlin conference in an article "We Have Paid Too Much", approved by the Politbureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee.³ In it he noted that "once again, the bourgeoisie, in the persons of their diplomats, have outwitted the representatives of the Communist International", and the Comintern delegates had made two political concessions to the bourgeoisie, without getting anything in exchange. That was a vital lesson for the future. But the agreement signed had to be honoured. "...It would be an incomparably greater mistake to reject all terms, or all payment for admission to these fairly well-guarded and barred premises", in which the "plenipotentiaries" of the bourgeoisie carried on their propaganda before a quite big gathering of workers.⁴

Lenin made a special appeal to the Italian and French Communists, cautioning them against the incorrect conclusion that the united front tactic was wrong. The true face of Social-Democratic leaders was still only seen by a minority of the workers in Italy, Britain, France, and America. Therefore "Communists must not stew in their own juice, but must learn to penetrate into prohibited premises where the representatives of the bourgeoisie are influencing the workers; and in this they must not shrink from making certain

¹ *The International Socialist Conference*, p. 60; see also Yu.L. Molchanov, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-32; A. Reisberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1 pp. 412-18.

² A. Reisberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 417-18.

³ *Pravda*, 11 April 1922.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "We Have Paid Too Much", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 330-34.

sacrifices and not be afraid of making mistakes,¹ which, at first, are inevitable in every new and difficult undertaking. The Communists who refuse to understand this and who do not want to learn how to do it cannot hope to win over the majority of the workers... For Communists, and all genuine adherents of the workers' revolution, this is absolutely unpardonable." The united front, he again stressed, was really essential so as to convince workers of the correctness of revolutionary tactics, and to help the masses understand the "cunning mechanism" of the two different approaches to the international economy and politics. "We adopted united front tactics" for the sake of that, he concluded, "and we shall pursue these tactics to the end".¹

Lenin's ideas on communist parties' methods of work among reformist-minded masses, if and when agreement on a united front was achieved, were of fundamental importance. In that case these parties' criticism of reformist organisations must be altered; it must be given a more explanatory character so as not to frighten worker-members of Social-Democratic parties off by sharp words, but patiently show them the contradictions between the proletariat's needs and reformist policy.²

The Presidium of the ECCI, the Central Committee of the RCP(B), and the plenary meeting of the ECCI of April 20 ratified the Berlin agreement. In an appeal "To the Class-Conscious Workers of the World", the ECCI called on them not to let the leaders of the Second International sabotage the united proletarian front, which those leaders wanted to strangle at birth. "The united front is not and should not be merely a fraternisation of party leaders... The united front means the association of all workers, whether Communist, anarchist, Social-Democratic, independent or non-party or even Christian workers, against the bourgeoisie. With the leaders, if they want it so, without the leaders if they remain indifferently aside, and in defiance of the leaders and against the leaders if they sabotage the workers' united front."³ The invitation to all bodies of the reformist Internationals to publish this appeal on a basis of reciprocity, however, got no response.

A blow at the idea of a world workers' congress was struck by the Amsterdam International Federation of Trade Unions, whose leaders had already refused earlier to take part in one. They convened their own statutory (Second) Congress in Rome, in which 105 delegates

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 332-34.

² V.I. Lenin, "Remarks and Proposals to the Draft Decision for the Comintern Executive Following the Conference of the Three Internationals", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, pp. 415-16.

³ *The Communist International 1919-1943, Documents*, Vol. 1, p. 341.

and around 100 guests from 20 countries, representing 24 million workers, took part.

An exhaustive resolution was adopted on the "Restoration of Europe" report of L. Jouhaux, calling on the ruling element to cancel war debts, to settle the reparations issue peacefully, to reduce the armies, whose strength in Europe had climbed to 4.7 million (against 3.7 million before World War I).

The resolution entitled "On Reaction", based on the report of C. Mertens, protested against military dictatorships, fascism and persecution of workers, and called for struggle against the offensive of the capitalist class, protecting "the 8-hour day, the present wage level, the rights and freedoms won by the workers". The call for a "single organisation of the world proletariat" stood, in effect, for the dissolution of the Red International of Labour Unions and the adherence of Soviet and US unions to the International Federation of Labour. The resolution "On War and Militarism" (rapporteur E. Fimmen provided for a trade union committee propagating limitation of the production of arms and materiel, and for a general strike, if war happened to break out.¹ The role of the congress was settled by these declarations, but the Social-Democratic press, stressing its "representative character" and the "resoluteness" of its statements, began to claim that there was no need for a world workers' congress after it.

Meanwhile the masses of the workers in capitalist countries were responding warmly to the Berlin resolution on joint actions. Big meetings and demonstrations, in which foreign Communists (Marcel Cachin, Bohumil Šmeral, and Sen Katayama) took part, were held in several German cities, against the opposition of the SPD. In Austria the Vienna Workers' Council set up an organising committee after Friedrich Adler's report which included representatives of trade unions, Social-Democrats and Communists. Only silent marches were held, without speakers, in spite of the Communists' objections. On May Day demonstrations were held in Italy in which Communists and Socialists took part. In Poland the Communist Workers' Party of Poland held demonstrations in several industrial centres together with the Socialist Party. In France the "Left" Communists reaffirmed their opposition to the Berlin conference, while the leadership of the PCF turned down the Socialists' proposal for joint May Day demonstrations. In Norway the Communists did not reply to the Social-Democrats' proposal for a joint demonstration and held their own. In Denmark, on the contrary, the Social-Democrats ignored the Communists' appeal. In Czechoslovakia the Social-Democrats,

¹ *Bericht über den Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongress, abgehalten in Rom vom 20. bis 26. April 1922 in Teatro Argentina, Amsterdam, 1923.*

branding the Communists as "splitters", did not take part in the rallies.

The leadership of the Second International openly sabotaged convening of the Commission of Nine. The Comintern's many protests, and its appeals to the representatives of the Vienna International, were fruitless. The right-wing Socialist press declared the tactic of the united front a "perfidious Machiavellian plan", and the Comintern an "instrument of the foreign policy of the Soviet government". Friedrich Adler also joined in the attacks.¹ In order to knock down this argument of the opponents of unity, a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the RCP(B) commissioned its representative on the Nine to declare his readiness to delete the call to defend Soviet Russia from the common platform adopted. The Presidium of the ECCI at the same time gave its delegation instructions to present the representatives of the Second International with an ultimatum on whether or not they intended to hold the congress in the immediate future.²

But MacDonald, de Brouckère, and Blum had already agreed behind the scenes to hold a meeting without Communists during the forthcoming economic conference in The Hague. This understanding was officially confirmed by the Executive Committee of the Second International right on the eve of the convening of the Commission of Nine. The latter's first session in Berlin on 23 May 1922 (a month and a half after its creation) was its last. It opened with a statement by the Second International, read out by MacDonald, that rejected not only the world workers' congress but also any united action with Communists. The representatives of the Second International demanded that the Comintern change its "line of action", i.e. its policy. In his reply Radek branded this as sabotage of unity. The representatives of the Vienna International this time openly supported the Second International. Friedrich Adler declared that it was humanly impossible to fix a date for convening the congress. Since it was clear that the congress was wrecked, the delegation of the ECCI announced its withdrawal from the Commission of Nine, whose existence no longer made sense. The right-wing Socialist leaders did not conceal their satisfaction that co-operation with the Comintern had ceased; the conference of the Second International held in London on 18-19 June 1922 expressed this in its resolution.³

The second enlarged plenary meeting of the ECCI, in June 1922, summing up the first attempt at joint action of the three Interna-

¹ Yu.L. Molchanov, *op. cit.*, p. 252; A. Reisberg, *op. cit.* Vol. 1, pp. 436-38.

² *Die Tätigkeit...*, p. 50. The Soviet government also agreed to admit defence counsel from abroad to the trial of the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

³ Yu.L. Molchanov, *op. cit.*, pp. 256-258; I.N. Krivoguz, *The Labour and Socialist International (1923-1940)*, Moscow, 1979, p. 21 (in Russian).

tionals to convene a world workers' congress, approved the work of its delegation in Berlin and confirmed the need to continue and strengthen the policy of a united front. The opposition of the Communist Parties of France, Italy, and several other countries, which was complicating practical implementation of this tactic, was criticised, and also the attempts made by some people in the French Party to "see a rebirth of reformism in what is in fact an intensification of the methods of fighting against reformism".¹

At that time Lenin demonstrated on the example of France the psychological difficulty of the communist movement's making a turn. "The process of changing the *type* of Party work in everyday life, of getting it out of the humdrum channel; the process of converting the Party into the vanguard of the revolutionary proletariat without permitting it to become divorced from the masses, but, on the contrary, by linking it more and more closely with them, imbuing them with revolutionary consciousness and rousing them for the revolutionary struggle, is a very difficult, but most important one." Communists could not do without a "fundamental, internal, profound reorganisation of the whole structure of their Parties and of their work".²

THE IDEA OF A WORKERS' AND A WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' GOVERNMENT

Even after the failure of the Berlin conference of the three Internationals, the communist movement continued to work actively for a united workers' front. The logic of united actions for partial demands had already brought the Communists of certain countries (in particular Germany) to the problem of political alliances, including the issue of the possibility of creating a "workers' government". In 1921 there were land governments of the SPD and USPD in Saxony, Brunswick, and Thuringia, which could only remain in office through the support of Communist deputies. In November the Central Committee of the KPD drafted theses expressing the Party's dual attitude to these governments: on the one hand recognising the positive role of "Socialist" governments in circumstances when the working class was not yet directly struggling for political power, and on the other hand resolutely rejecting Communist participation in them (both in Germany and in its separate lands). At the plenary session of the Central Committee on November 16-17 opinions di-

¹ Extract from the resolution of the Enlarged ECCI on the French Communist Party (11 June 1922), *The Communist International 1919-1943. Documents*, Vol. 1, pp. 356-57.

² V.I. Lenin, "Notes of a Publicist", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 209.

verged. The "ultralefts" Hugo Urbahns and Ruth Fischer vehemently rejected any support for a "workers' government", pleading that only a bourgeois or a proletarian dictatorship was possible. The slogan of a workers' government, they said, was suitable only to mask Communists' demands for a Soviet republic and the dictatorship of the proletariat.¹ But in December 1921, and even more definitely in January 1922, the leadership of the KPD concluded, after sharp debates, that it was permissible in principle for Communists to take office in a workers' government when that was the will of the masses of the workers and there was a real chance of broadening workers' power.² That conclusion corresponded both to the objective conditions existing in Germany and to the level of consciousness of the broad masses of the working class, who were not yet ready for a direct fight for real proletarian power. The slogan of a workers' government offered new chances of, and meant important new approaches to, practical implementation of the tactic of the united front.

The issue of Communist support for the Social-Democratic governments existing in Saxony, Thuringia, and Brunswick, which could form a "Red bloc" against the reactionary policies of the German and Bavarian governments, proved complicated in practice. The Communists displayed restraint and a readiness to agree during long negotiations with the representatives of the other two parties in Saxony, but did not succeed in reaching agreement.³

Meanwhile the political situation in Germany was getting worse. The Franco-German differences on reparations were escalating into a political conflict. The main spokesman of the reactionary groups of German monopolists, Hugo Stinnes, called for stopping of reparation payments, even if it led to French occupation of the Ruhr. With the growth of anti-French chauvinist feelings reactionary organisations became noticeably more active. Secret unions of monarchists and nationalists passed to terrorist acts against Communists, Social-Democrats, and Republicans. Attempts were made on the lives of Ernst Thälmann and Scheidemann. On 24 June 1922, a terrorist from the Konsul organisation, which had murdered Erzberger the year before, killed the prominent industrialist and bourgeois politician, Walther Rathenau, Minister of Foreign Affairs, who two months previously had signed a treaty with Soviet Russia.

This political murder stirred the working class, and gave a new impulse to united actions of its various organisations. A powerful wave of protest meetings, demonstrations, and strikes swept the

¹ A. Reisberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 259-60, 264-71, 296-99.

² H. Küster (Ed.), *Dokumente und Materialien zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 7, Part 2, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1966, p. 15.

³ A. Reisberg, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 461, 468, 476.

country, in which millions of workers and office employees, and prominent spokesmen of democratic circles of the bourgeoisie and intellectuals, took part. The Central Committee of the KPD proposed joint action against reaction to the leaders of the SPD, USPD, and the Association of German Trade Unions. On June 27 a half-day general protest strike was held. The KPD, the SPD, USPD, and the trade union associations of workers and office employees signed a Berlin agreement calling on the government to pass an act to defend the republic that envisaged banning of reactionary organisations and leagues, and purging of the state machinery and army of enemies of the republic.

Although the Social-Democratic leaders again wrecked united actions, and the law passed was so formulated as to be usable against revolutionaries as well, the campaign for it became the second biggest action of the workers' united front in Germany since the Kapp putsch. In the draft of the KPD's new Party programme there was an item that "it is necessary to oppose with the utmost energy every attempt to set aside bourgeois democracy in favour of absolute power".¹

Nevertheless, the leaders of the SPD, USPD, and Trade Unions Association, fearing that development of a movement for proletarian unity would lead to further growth of the Communists' influence, broke off negotiations with the KPD on July 8 and began to promote a merging of reformist organisations. In September 1922 the SPD and USPD were merged at a congress in Nürnberg on the basis of the Görlitz programme of the SPD. A commission headed by Kautsky was asked to draft a new programme. Only the small group led by Georg Ledebour did not agree with this ideological capitulation.

In *France* the cantonal elections held in the summer of 1922 refuted the thesis of the opponents of a united front that the Socialists did not have any influence: they obtained 276,000 votes and the Communists 214,000. The strikes also showed that success could only be achieved when the various organisations acted together; the CGTU was perseveringly working to restore trade union unity.² The leadership of the Communist Party nevertheless displayed persistent unwillingness to carry out the decisions of the Comintern, and the Second Enlarged Plenary Meeting of the ECCI in June 1922 noted that the press and leading bodies of the CPF had incorrectly informed the Party as to the sense and importance of the united front tactic. It recalled that the most glorious chapter in the history of the French proletariat, the Paris Commune, was nothing but a bloc of all organisations and trends of the working class against the bour-

¹ H. Küster (Ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 177.

² *Communists of Western Europe in the Struggle for a United Proletarian Front*, pp. 182, 189.

geoisie. As the workers' government of France the Commune was a stage on the way to socialism. It would be enough for a class-conscious worker to study in full the example of the Commune to find in his own heroic past all relevant arguments for a genuinely revolutionary united front tactics with the concomitant demand of a workers' government. This tactics alone, if applied consistently in the economy and politics could extend the sphere of the party's influence to thousands of workers to whom it could not reach before.¹

Events reached their highest pitch in *Italy*. The economic crisis got much worse; even some big monopolies and banks crashed. In that situation, the fascists, having consolidated their organisation, took the offensive against democratic institutions under the banner of the "common national interests". In February 1922 they openly put forward the slogan "Down with Parliament! Long Live the Dictatorship". The political miscalculation of the liberals and democrats, who had hoped to "tame" the fascists by concessions and tolerance, became obvious. The fascists threw off the mask of assumed "radicalism", and more and more frankly revealed their reactionary, nationalistic orientation. From atheistic declarations they passed to collaboration with clericals, from republicanism to monarchism, from "social motives" to "leaderism" and theories of the "select minority". They openly repudiated all norms of law and morality, democracy, and freedom of the individual. Having strengthened their position in Modena, Bologna, and Rimini, they prepared to attack the centres of the industrial triangle.

The workers continued to put up a resistance, sometimes armed, to the fascists. At the end of July, the Labour Alliance, set up on the initiative of the railwaymen's union, called a general strike "in defence of political and trade union liberty". In Milan, Leghorn, and Bari, and especially in Parma, the workers fought heroically against well-armed fascist *squadre* supported by regular troops.² Barricades were thrown up in some towns. The PCI welcomed the strike as a "specific form of the united proletarian front".³ But the strike was poorly organised and the struggle quickly subsided.

The Bordiga leadership of the PCI continued, despite the facts, to consider that "the advent of a fascist or military dictatorship is impossible", and that "the ever vaster and more complete offensive of the bourgeoisie would have a social-democratic outcome", while fascist violence was simply "an inevitable consequence of the bourgeois regime's development". At the party's Second Congress in Rome in March 1922, Kolaroff, representing the ECCI, did not suc-

¹ *The Communist International in Documents*, pp. 286-87.

² Camilla Ravera, *Diario di trent'anni 1913-1943*, Editori Riuniti, Rome, 1973, pp. 116-19; G. Candeloro, *Il movimento sindacale in Italia*, Rome, pp. 122-24.

³ P. Spriano, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

ceed in convincing Bordiga that political struggle against fascism "can only be fought under the leadership of the mass of the workers, and tightening the ties of the united front".¹ The sectarian position of the PCI leadership, expressed in the Rome Theses, prevented the establishing of co-operation of anti-fascists.

The internal struggle within the Italian Socialist Party became much sharper. At its congress in Rome, at the beginning of October 1922, the Maximalists (especially the group of "Third Internationalists") finally did what they had failed to do in Livorno, viz., to expel the reformists (who soon formed a Unitary Socialist Party). Subsequent rapprochement of the Maximalists and Communists was interrupted, however, by the sharp aggravation of the political situation.²

At the end of October 1922 the fascists decided the moment had come to seize power. Mussolini, while continuing to bargain with politicians of the bourgeois-liberal parties about his participation in the government, mobilised the Blackshirts. At an assembly of fascists in Naples he gave the signal for a "march on Rome". A symbolic march of the fascist columns began on October 28. Two days later Mussolini and King Victor Emmanuel together greeted the parade of fascist *squadristi* from the balcony of the Palazzo Venezia in Rome. On October 31 Mussolini became head of the government. In November the Italian Parliament (in which his party had hardly 7 per cent of the seats) gave his government a three-quarters vote of confidence, thereby signing its death warrant.³

The fascists, having seized power, set about wrecking workers' newspapers and organisations. Dozens of Communists, Socialists, and anarchists were brutally murdered in Turin in December. Early in 1923 the fascist government began wide persecution of Communists throughout the country.

The establishment of a fascist dictatorship in Italy, which turned the fascist danger into a reality, presented the international labour movement with new problems. At the same time, as Mussolini came to power, the group of Italian delegates in Moscow for the Fourth Congress of the Comintern had a meeting with Lenin. To his question about the latest events in Italy, one of them replied that the fascists' success was nothing out of the ordinary. Knowing that the Italian workers were fighting fascism, Lenin remarked, according to Camilla Ravera: "The working class is always fighting to win and defend democratic rights, even when they are limited by bourgeois authorit-

¹ Luigi Longo-Carlo Salinari, *Tra reazione e rivoluzione*, Edizioni del Calendario, Milan, 1972, pp. 156-57.

² Serrati's supporters had not joined the Communist Party until 1924.

³ Luigi Longo-Carlo Salinari, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

ies. And when it loses them, it fights to get them back, and at the same time seeks allies".¹

Despite his illness Lenin took an active part in the preparations for the Fourth Congress of the Comintern. In a talk with Clara Zetkin he stressed that the changes in the world situation had not in the least reduced the immense significance of the task of winning the masses. Comparing the "Lefts" (who dreamed of turning back from the tactics of the Third Congress) with the Bourbons (who learned nothing and forgot nothing), he said: "As far as I am aware, 'left' criticism (criticism of mistakes made in pursuing the tactics of the united front apart) conceals a longing to send the tactic of the united front itself to the devil." The forthcoming Congress should, on the contrary, "confirm, underline, and strongly stress the decisions of the Third Congress as the basis of the Comintern's work". If Communists were striving for revolution and to win power, they must become the party of the masses. And there was no other road to that, today, like yesterday, "than the one marked out by the Third Congress".²

The same thought was expressed in his greetings to the Fourth Congress, which opened in Petrograd on 5 November 1922, on the eve of the fifth anniversary of the October Revolution: "Notwithstanding the enormous obstacles confronting the Communist Parties, the Communist International is growing and becoming strong. The main goal is still to win over the majority of the workers. We *shall* attain this goal in spite of everything."³

In the work of the congress, which continued in Moscow from 9 November to 5 December, 408 delegates took part (343 with a vote) from 66 communist parties and organisations from 58 countries. There were also representatives of the Italian Socialist Party, the Labour Party of Iceland, and the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, the Profintern, the CYI, the International Women's Secretariat, and an organisation of US Blacks. At that time the communist parties had 1,253,000 members, including 825,000 in capitalist countries. That was considerably fewer than eighteen months earlier. The ebbing of the revolutionary wave and the departure of unstable elements had had their effect.⁴

The international situation and the position in the labour movement became even more complicated and contradictory at the end

¹ *Reminiscences of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin*, Vol. 5, Moscow, 1979, pp. 457-58 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, p. 36.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Fourth Congress of the Communist International", November 5-December 5, 1922, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 417.

⁴ *The Communist International. A Short Historical Survey*, Moscow, 1969, p. 169 (in Russian).

of 1922 than eighteen months before, at the time of the Third Congress of the Comintern. Inter-imperialist antagonisms had sharpened, an armed conflict was imminent between France and Germany, threatening a new war. At the same time Soviet Russia had broken the economic blockade, and possibilities of business contacts were emerging, albeit limited and unstable.

Lenin's speech was of fundamental importance for all the issues connected with evaluation of the situation and the working out of a political line by the congress. Since he was not quite recovered from a long, grave illness, the doctors only permitted him to make a short report. The delegates and guests of the congress greeted his appearance at a session on 13 November with stormy ovations. He delivered his report on the five years of the Russian Revolution and the prospects of the world revolution in German. It was mainly devoted to the results and significance of the new economic policy and the building of socialism in Soviet Russia. When speaking of the difficulties and progress in rehabilitating the economy and concentration of efforts on promoting heavy industry, he pointed out that the paramount task of the RCP(B) was to learn how to manage the economy, to move forward gradually, without too much haste, and to consolidate the Land of Soviets as the main bastion of the revolutionary struggle throughout the world.

His report contained several very important considerations on the tasks of the proletarian class struggle. Starting from the general trend of the time—the need to wage a defence battle—Lenin said that the communist movement as a whole needed to assimilate the idea (important both in theory and practice), that “all the parties which are preparing to take the direct offensive against capitalism in the near future must now give thought to the problem of preparing for a possible retreat”. When one was dealing with real opponents who could display self-control, gather forces in advance, provoke revolutionaries into an unprepared attack, and then throw them back many years, one could not manage without a thoroughly considered plan, envisaging both an offensive and the ensuring of an organised retreat. That was the lesson of the experience of the Russian and international revolutions.¹

Lenin considered it important for communist parties to make use of international revolutionary experience, above all that of the Bolsheviks: “I am sure that in this connection we must tell not only the Russians, but the foreign comrades as well, that the most important thing in the period we are now entering is to study.”² In that connection he specially stressed the inadmissibility of mechanically

¹ V.I. Lenin, “Fourth Congress of the Communist International”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 421.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 431-32.

transferring Soviet experience to other countries, recalling the resolution of the Third Congress of the Comintern on the organisational structures of communist parties, and their methods and work. The resolution, he said, was "an excellent one, but it is almost entirely Russian, that is to say, everything in it is based on Russian conditions. This is its good point, but it is also its failing." The Bolsheviks needed to learn how to explain the essence of the Russian experience more competently to foreign comrades, while the foreigners must not turn it into an icon but needed to take it with due allowance for the concrete conditions of place and time, in order to "really understand the organisation, structure, method and content of revolutionary work".¹

Lenin's report was a wonderful model, in both content and tone, of how to combine concrete analysis of the conditions and tasks of building socialism in Soviet Russia with broad understanding of the international revolutionary outlook, of how to combine revolutionary optimism with a realistic evaluation of the difficulties facing the Communists of various countries. In orienting everybody on learning, Lenin himself gave an example of creative interpretation of historical experience so as to tackle the new tasks being thrown up by life.

Trotsky tried to oppose his own position to Lenin's understanding (which was firmly supported in the speeches of Clara Zetkin, Béla Kun, and several other delegates) of the role of Soviet Russia in the world revolutionary process. He linked all hopes of the victory of socialism in Russia with the liquidation of the capitalist system in Western Europe and the material and technical aid of the West European proletariat. "If, however, the capitalist world is going to endure for several decades, then this would signify a death sentence for Soviet Russia."² The congress unanimously endorsed Lenin's conclusions, stressing in its resolution on the Russian Revolution that "the consolidation of Soviet Russia means the weakening of the world bourgeoisie".³

In the report of the ECCI, made by its chairman G. E. Zinoviev, and in the report of Karl Radek on capital's offensive, two tendencies were noted in the international situation and the fight of the working class: on the one hand, the bourgeois offensive against the working class continued everywhere, using *inter alia* methods of fascist terror; on the other hand, the proletariat's revolutionary potentialities had

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 430-432.

² *Fourth Congress of the Communist International. Abridged Report of Meetings*, Published for the Communist International by the Communist Party of Great Britain, London, 1923, p. 128. For further details see V.V. Alexandrov, *op. cit.*, p. 458.

³ *V.I. Lenin and the Communist International*, p. 471.

not been exhausted, and sharper class battles were in the offing. It was difficult to give an unequivocal answer as to whether a protracted phase of defensive struggle lay ahead, or whether prospects of a new period of revolutionary storms would open up. The reports stressed the tasks of defence, and substantiated the need for continued application of the tactics of the united front, but Zinoviev put the accent on the expectation of a growth of new battles, interpreting the offensive of the forces of reaction (including the rise of the fascists to power in Italy) as "a stage in the maturing of the proletarian revolution".¹

In spite of the activity of the "Left" the congress did not agree with that approach. The original draft of the Theses on the Tactics of the Comintern, which clearly erred toward ultra-leftism, was substantially altered, with the introduction of new sections. The document passed by the congress said that the more Soviet Russia was economically restored and strengthened, the greater would be the influence of this major factor of the international revolution. Since the proletariat of other countries did not take advantage of the weakened state of capitalism, caused by the war, to deal it the final crushing blows, the bourgeoisie managed to suppress the revolutionary workers, to reinforce its political and economic power, and then to start an offensive of gigantic proportions, compelling the workers of all countries to adopt measures of self-defence.²

At the same time the resolutions were not free of contradictions. The progressing decay of the capitalist economy and the imminent disintegration of capitalism, the impossibility of restoring Europe, and the chaos of the collapsing system of capitalist states were spoken about in exaggerated terms. It was concluded from the widening of the scope of the defensive struggles that it "by no means stultifies the systematically increasing antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The situation remains objectively revolutionary, and the slightest outbreak may become today the point of issue for great revolutionary struggles." At the same time the resolution also spoke of the possibility of the overt bourgeois reaction being replaced by a "democratic pacifist era" in a number of countries.³

Lenin proved to be quite right when he predicted that the "Lefts" intended again to pass from criticism of the united front to practical rejection of that policy. The real danger, however, was that certain of the Comintern's influential leaders began gradually to slide back (or return) to that position. The issue of the united front policy became the centre of attention of the congress. Almost every item on the agenda spoke of its implementation. The correct idea was put

¹ *Fourth Congress of the Communist International...*, p. 31.

² *V.I. Lenin and the Communist International*, pp. 461-62.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 459-63.

forward in the report of the ECCI that the tactics of the united front denoted something more than an episode in the struggle but a whole period, and possibly "an entire epoch". At the same time Zinoviev declared the Communists' most important task to be to beat the Social-Democrats as "our chief enemy and the main prop of the bourgeoisie" on an international scale.¹ Such an approach essentially narrowed the real chances of the workers' united front policy, reducing it to exposure of Social-Democratic leaders.

The "Lefts" and "ultralefts", while not daring in principle to reject united front tactics, attacked them on the pretext of their ineffectiveness. Urbahns, Bordiga, and Stein-Kamensky spoke of the danger of its degeneration into "communist revisionism". The Italian delegation in general rejected transitional demands and a transitional period. Ruth Fischer accused the ECCI of underestimating the revolutionary maturity of the masses, and of occupying itself only with "the question of dealing with the leaders", with "a revision of the revolution", with "a trimming of the revolution in 'Western' style" and so on.² The Czechoslovak "ultralefts" imputed an intention to Šmeral to build a front including clericals, Masaryk, and the government. The French "Left" considered that the united front would generate into "electoral cretinism".

The active character of the attacks of the "Leftists", who did not have much experience of revolutionary struggle, was largely explained by the psychological difficulty of their changing their approach, and the oversimplified rigidity of their understanding of revolutionary principles. Since the attitude to the line on socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat had been the touchstone of real revolutionism during the drawing of a line with reformists, the "Leftists" somehow could not grasp the need for shifting the centre of gravity to a preparatory stage in the changed conditions, without advancing tasks of direct struggle for political power and socialist demands. But there were also incorrigible adventurists among the "Leftists".

"Left" moods and attacks were rejected and rebuffed by many delegates, including spokesmen of the Communist Parties of Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Russia, who stressed the need for a defensive struggle of the workers, a united front, and the advancing of everyday demands as important means of rallying all the forces of the working class. The German and Bulgarian delegations came out in this connection against Bukharin's proposal (in the report on the programme) not to include transitional demands, and therefore also the united front tactic, in the draft programme of the Comintern. Bukharin

¹ *Fourth Congress of the Communist International...*, p. 34.

² *Bulletin of the IV Congress of the Communist International*, Moscow, No. 3, 12 November 1922, pp. 17-20.

accused those who wanted to include them of "cowardice of thought" and "opportunist deviations", and of desiring "to confirm the state of defence in the programme and make an offensive impossible".¹

Since Bukharin's report had not been moved for discussion in its name, the delegation of the RCP(B) asked the Presidium of the congress to give it the opportunity to discuss the disputed issue beforehand. At a meeting of the delegation bureau, chaired by Lenin in his office on November 20, it was agreed that the need to fight for transitional demands (with the underlying reservation that they depended on the concrete circumstances of time and place) should be clearly and categorically expressed in the national programmes of communist parties, while the common programme of the Comintern should indicate definitely both "the theoretical basis for all such transition or limited demands" and "the basic historical types of transition demands of the national parties depending on cardinal differences of economic structure". The congress was recommended to declare (or rather, to recall the corresponding resolution of the Third Congress) that it strongly condemned "both the attempts to represent the inclusion of limited demands in the programme as opportunism, and all and any attempts to use limited demands to obscure and sidetrack the basic revolutionary task".² These proposals were accepted by the congress and included in its resolutions.³

In accordance with the general course outlined by Lenin, the Fourth Congress expressly confirmed the resolutions of the Third Congress and elaborated on the pressing problems of winning over the majority of the working class. In its Theses on Tactics it stressed that the united front alone "could indicate to the Communists the correct path to winning over the majority of the workers to their side", and reaffirmed Lenin's fundamental idea that "the united front tactics *will be decisive for the new epoch*".⁴ The Congress, however, did not limit itself to that, but put forward the slogan of a *workers' government* as an imperative of the united front tactics.

The issuing of this slogan was the result of long discussion and bitter disputes at and outside the congress. Zinoviev had already earlier tried to interpret it simply as a "pseudonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat", and said in his report to the congress that

¹ *Fourth World Congress of the Communist International, Selected Reports, Speeches and Resolutions*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1923, pp. 196-99, 210, 211, 216-17, 223 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "Draft Resolution for the Fourth Congress of the Comintern on the Question of the Programme of Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, pp. 427-28.

³ V.I. Lenin and the Communist International, pp. 447-48. The Congress instructed the ECCI to continue its work on the programme.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 466 (our italics—Ed.).

its operation as a transition slogan would be "a minor episode".¹ The congress denounced such a narrow understanding of the matter, considering that the formation of a real workers' government would be an important counterweight to pseudo-workers' government, in which reformists openly or covertly joined a coalition with the bourgeoisie.² The resolution directly stressed that there was no question of Communists' supporting a "Liberal" government (such as in Australia and possibly in Great Britain) or a Social-Democratic government (as in Germany).

Great importance was attached to a differentiated approach to the idea of a workers' government. It was noted that it could be applied as a "general propagandist slogan" almost everywhere; but as "a *relevant political watchword* of the day" it could be used only in those countries where the bourgeois society was unstable: "To an open or disguised bourgeois-Social-Democratic coalition the Communists oppose a United Front of the workers, a coalition of all the workers' parties in the economic and political field for the struggle against the bourgeois power and for the ultimate overthrow of the latter."

In addition to a government of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which could only arise from the struggle of the masses in a revolutionary situation, stressed the theses, "a workers' government which is the outcome of parliamentary groupings, that is to say, which is of a purely parliamentary origin, *may* likewise become the cause of a revival of the revolutionary labour movement". In certain circumstances, therefore, Communists should be prepared to support such a government or even to "form a government jointly with the non-Communist workers' parties and organisations".³ That new conclusion greatly expanded the framework of possible collaboration with socialist parties, including for the first time agreement at government level.

The measures of such a workers' government (or of a workers' and poorest peasants' government in the Balkans, Czechoslovakia, Poland, etc.) should primarily "consist in arming the proletariat, in disarming the bourgeois counter-revolutionary organisations, in introducing control of production, in putting the chief burden of taxation on the shoulders of the rich and in breaking down the resist-

¹ *Internationale Presse-korrespondenz*, No. 223, 1922, p. 1600. In his closing speech Zinoviev repudiated the term "pseudonym".

² A Social-Democratic government, headed by Hjalmar Branting, was formed in Sweden early in 1920, the first in Scandinavia. At the height of the economic crisis in the autumn of 1921 a second Branting Government was formed, to which the bourgeoisie entrusted the quest for a way out of the economic difficulties.

³ *V.I. Lenin and the Communist International*, pp. 466-67.

ance of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie".¹ These revolutionary-democratic tasks led the proletariat to struggle for political power. Government of that type was not the dictatorship of the proletariat, but a historically necessary transitional form toward it. Such governments could, however, as the Theses said, become "starting points for the struggle for dictatorship"².

Communists entering such a government should be under very strict control of their party, be in close contact with the revolutionary organisations of the working masses, and endeavouring in every way to increase the latter's activity. Communist parties should maintain their complete independence in agitational work, and freedom to criticise their partners.

The Fourth Congress adopted instructions on the application of the theses of the Second Congress on the agrarian question, which formulated demands meant to help communist parties to win over the rural working masses to the side of the working class. It was a matter of providing poor peasants with land, cattle, and farm implements, reducing rent, improving the position of share-croppers, freeing the poor peasantry from taxation, and struggle against exploitation of the working peasants by monopolies, usurers' capital, etc.³ This platform for mobilising the peasants for joint struggle together with the working class was aimed at promoting a strengthening of the alliance of workers and peasants.

The Comintern soon made another advance on this question, developing the formula of a *workers' and peasants' government*, which was brought up for discussion at the Third Enlarged Plenum of the ECCI, held in Moscow from the 12th to the 23rd of June 1923.

The slogan meant a further development of the Fourth Congress's decision on the workers' government. It was immediately supported not only by the representatives of countries with an overwhelmingly peasant population (Bulgaria), but also by delegates from Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain, and the USA. The plenum's resolution stressed that the concise political formula arrived at would make it possible to carry out the decisions of the Second and Fourth congresses with the greatest success. It noted the growth of the peasant movement in many countries, the vigorous activity of a number of peasant parties, and pointed out that "on the whole, the attempts of the peasantry to steer it's own independent middle-of-the-way course between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat have unavoidably come to nought." Only a firm alliance of the workers and peasants,

¹ *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International*. London, 1922, p. 32.

² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

³ *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International*, pp. 79-84.

under the leadership of the working class, could bring success. The slogan of a "workers' and peasants' government" therefore should become the general watchword of Communist Parties so that this alliance, not limiting itself to economic struggle, would also cover political struggle, including problems of the forming of a government. This slogan "leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat by broadening the base of the united front, the only correct tactics in the present stage". Much broader masses of the workers could be drawn into the struggle to form such a transitional government than for immediate carrying out of the socialist revolution.

Since such general democratic tasks as complete elimination of survivals of feudalism and a radical agrarian reform had not yet been solved in many capitalist countries, the developed ones included, not to mention ensuring de facto realisation of the freedoms proclaimed by bourgeois democracy or limiting omnipotent Big Business, Communist parties should give priority to general democratic, national tasks. The starting point of agitation for a workers' and peasants' government should be defence of the elementary economic interests of the working class and labouring peasantry. This watchword would also be useful even after the proletariat's winning of power, as it would remind Communist parties of the need "to check it's onward movement against the peasant sentiment in the country concerned, to establish correct relationships between the victorious proletariat and the peasantry and to carry out economic measures judiciously and gradually".¹

The formula was a creative development of Lenin's idea on the ways of leading the broad masses to the revolution and educating them during the struggle from their own political experience. The plenum specially stressed that agitation for this slogan should necessarily be concretised in regard to the situation in each separate country. In the USA, for example, it might be a matter of a government of workers and working farmers. All parties were advised to develop action programmes on the new principles, with due regard for their national conditions.

The question of *fascism* also had an important place in the work of the Third Plenum of the ECCI. The Fourth Congress had already described international fascism as an instrument of the big bourgeoisie for forcible suppression of the proletariat's revolutionary strivings and all its attempts to better its position, and had drawn a conclusion of great importance, stressing that international fascism was directed at the same time "against the foundations of bourgeois democracy as a whole". There was thus the possibility of drawing non-proletar-

¹ Protokoll der Konferenz der Erweiterten Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale, Moskau 12.-23. Juni 1923, Verlag Carl Hoym Nachf. Louis Cahnbley, Hamburg, 1923, p. 281-283.

ian strata into a united anti-fascist front. The Congress had called on Communist parties "to take the lead in the struggle of all the workers against the Fascist bands, and vigorously to carry the tactics of the United Front into this field of activity, where the methods of illegal organisation are an *absolute necessity*".¹

In her report to the plenum, entitled "The Fight against Fascism", Clara Zetkin spoke of fascism as a dangerous, real enemy, defining it as "the strongest, most concentrated, classic expression of the world bourgeoisie's general offensive at this moment". While not reducing it to terror, she refuted the false idea that it was a response to "Bolshevist terror". "Only when we understand that fascism carries on inciting, inflammatory agitation among the broad social masses, will we be able to fight it". One of the causes of fascism was the deep disappointment with capitalism not just of the proletariat but also of the large sections of the petty and middle bourgeoisie and intellectuals. Another was the hold-up in the course of the world revolution, and disappointment with reformist socialism and the "democratic" road it recommended. Clara Zetkin also laid a measure of blame on Communist parties, which had failed to establish close enough links with the broad masses.

The bourgeoisie looked on the fascists as their allies, supplied them with money, and supported them. "It is obvious that fascism has various characteristics in different countries, according to the current concrete circumstances. But it has two features of its own in all countries: a pseudo-revolutionary programme which is extremely skilfully adapted to the temper, interests, and demands of the broadest social masses, and also the employment of the most brutal, violent terror."² Clara Zetkin demonstrated these features and roots of fascism primarily from the "classic example" of Italy.

Although her report exaggerated the ideological and political crisis of the fascist movement, it stressed that it was dangerous to pin hopes on its imminent collapse. A wait-and-see, passive stand in regard to fascism would be a fatal mistake; Clara Zetkin called for a most energetic struggle against it in all countries, especially Germany. That demanded intensification of the ideological and political struggle to win over the masses. It was necessary to win over, or at least to neutralise, "not only the core of the proletarians who have lapsed into fascism but also the core of the middle and lower middle classes, the small peasants and intellectuals, in short, all the strata who today are coming into increasing opposition, through their economic and social position, with Big Business and into sharp conflict with it". At the same time it was impossible for an instant to

¹ *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress...*, p. 28 (our italics—Ed.).

² *Protokoll der Konferenz der Erweiterten Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale, Moskau, 12.-23. Juni 1923*, pp. 205, 206, 207, 209, 211, 212.

ignore armed self-defence of the proletariat against fascist terror. Since "fascism does not ask whether the workers in a factory have a white-and-blue Bavarian soul", the workers' struggle and self-defence against it "means a proletarian united front". The slogan of a workers' and peasants' government was a necessary and important link in the fight against fascism.¹

The appeal adopted by the ECCI Plenum warned that "the fate of their Italian brothers threatened the working class of the whole world". It therefore advised workers' parties and organisations of all trends in all countries to set up united bodies to lead the anti-fascist struggle. Not limiting themselves to agitation and propaganda, they should form armed squads, set up control committees, suppress all attempts to terrorise the workers, and at the same time expose fascism more actively in trade unions, parliaments, etc. The best means of combating fascism in Italy and throughout the world was "energetic struggle against it in one's own country".²

The Comintern's directives, which defined transitional political aims, provided the necessary ideological and political foundation for rallying anti-fascists. In some countries, it is true, where fascism had not become a serious danger, Communists looked on the fight against it simply as an element of advance toward a workers' and peasants' government, and sometimes even as a component of the struggle for proletarian power. Many Communists then supposed that fascism could only be fought through socialist revolution, since it was an instrument of Big Business. The real possibility of a broad anti-fascist movement was not then given serious consideration. Communists still had to overcome these weaknesses. But the main point was that the Fourth Congress and the Third Plenum of the ECCI worked out a clear directive: in the fight against fascism, too, a united front of all working people was needed.

Certain aspects of the united front policy presented special difficulty at that time. One was the question of combining the struggle for unity of action "from below" and "from above". Compared with the Comintern's previous decisions, the Fourth Congress put greater stress on action "from below", which had several reasons: (1) the disappointment caused by the frankly anti-communist policy of the leaders not only of the Second International but also of the Two-and-a-Half International, who had broken off negotiations for joint international actions; (2) the influence of "leftists", including in the ECCI; (3) the lack of clarity in the general estimate of the situation and outlook for the development of the world revolutionary process.

Many of the concrete decisions of the Fourth Congress and Third

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 231-32.

² *Ibid.*, p. 298.

Enlarged Plenum were also devoted in one way or another to the united front policy and the tasks of implementing it in practice. On the basis of reports by Edwin Hoernle and Nadezhda Krupskaya, for example, the Congress recommended an extension of Communist parties' work in the sphere of education and agitation. Communists' work in trade unions, co-operative societies, women's organisations, and youth organisations was considered from the same angle.

The Fourth Congress's theses on communist work in trade unions, adopted after a report by S. A. Lozovsky, stressed the need to oppose the split in the trade union movement owing to the work of reformist leaders, and to fight for restoration of unity where it had been broken. These theses formed the basis of the decisions of the Second Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions that was held in Moscow from 19 November to 2 December 1922, and which detailed the actions that could unite workers in their fight for their interests. The proposal of the delegations from France and Czechoslovakia to form parallel revolutionary trade unions was rejected. At the same time the point on mutual representation of the Comintern and Red International in their executives was deleted from the Rules, which opened the way to agreement with the syndicalists of several countries.¹

The most stubborn anarchosyndicalists, however, who had already set up an International Bureau in the summer of 1922, held their own congress in Berlin on 25 December 1922, at which there were representatives of syndicalist organisations in 13 countries (Argentina, Chile, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Mexico, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the USA). This congress made it clear that the revolutionary syndicalists of France had already joined the Profintern, that the majority of Dutch syndicalists were gravitating to Moscow, and that the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) were refusing to join any of the Internationals. Nevertheless an *International Workingmen's Association* (the Berlin Trade Union International) was founded, which declared itself the successor of the First International, the enemy of reformism and capitalism, and advocate of a system of "self-managing producers". The Berlin International, however, immediately behaved in a hostile manner to the Profintern and Communist parties, and systematically disrupted united actions of the working class.² Not surprisingly its membership fell steadily, from 1,250,000 in 1921 to not more than 470,000 at the end of 1924.³

¹ *The Profintern in Its Resolutions*, Moscow, 1928. pp. 30-36 (in Russian).

² S.A. Lozovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-205; William Z. Foster, *Outline History of the World Trade Union Movement*, pp. 278-280.

³ L. Lorwin, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

The membership of the organisations of the Amsterdam International also continued to decline, from 22,400,000 in 1921 to 15,300,000 at the end of 1923.¹ But the IFTU displayed considerable political activity, as before. On 10-15 December 1922 the Amsterdamers, together with the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, held an International Peace Congress in The Hague at the same time as the economic conference there; 700 delegates arrived for it representing trade unions, co-operative societies, Socialist parties, and various pacifist societies. The congress could have played an important role if the organisers had displayed a desire to make it the starting point of a broad mass movement to parry capital's offensive by a "close-knit united front", which is how the Fourth Congress of the Comintern formulated the task in an open letter to all workers' and proletarian organisations of the world. "Do you really want," the letter said, "to remain idle and passively watch an eight-hour working day being abolished... the living standards of workers in the oldest industrialised countries decreasing... the elementary freedoms of the working class being suppressed... the victorious capitalists free from any shackles arbitrarily unleashing a new war?"²

The Comintern and the RILU were not invited to the Hague Congress, but a delegation of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCCTU) took an active part in it (S. A. Lozovsky, G. N. Melnichansky, Karl Radek, F. A. Rothstein, Alexandra Kollontai, and others). The reports of Leon Jouhaux, Edo Fimmen, and Arthur Henderson were devoted to the tasks of the labour movement in the struggle against war and militarism. As a counterweight to the arguments of the reformists the delegates of the AUCCTU put forward a concrete 14-point programme of actions of the workers' united front, which envisaged, in particular, the setting up of an international committee of struggle against the war danger, and the holding of a week of anti-militarist propaganda, to culminate in a demonstrative 24-hour general strike. While rejecting that proposal the congress nevertheless detailed the tasks for the anti-war struggle that had been outlined six months earlier by the Rome Congress of the IFTU. The resolutions adopted spoke not only of control over the production and transport of arms but also the possibility of applying an economic boycott and general strike.

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 394, 409. According to the same data membership of the International Confederation of Christian Unions had also fallen from nearly 3,760,000 at the end of 1921 to a little over 2,100,000 at the end of 1923. Only the RILU had shown a tendency to grow, from seven million to more than 7.33 million during the same period.

² *Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationalen, Petrograd-Moskau vom 5. November bis 5. Dezember 1922*, Hamburg, 1923, p. 1032.

A special resolution warned against occupation of the Ruhr and annexation of German territory, and also recommended a reorganisation of the League of Nations.¹

The Fourth Congress of the Comintern and the Third Congress of the Communist Youth International, held at almost the same time in Moscow, discussed the tasks of the revolutionary youth in implementing the united front policy. The appeal of the CYI to the leadership of the Social-Democratic Labour Youth International (founded at a conference in Amsterdam in May 1921, at which Erich Ollenhauer was elected Secretary), and the International Association of Socialist Youth Organisations (linked with the Vienna International) on the holding of a world congress of youth was turned down. The Congress of the CYI called on its organisations to continue to fight to establish unity of action and strengthen the branch youth organisations, especially their factory cells.² In his greetings to the delegates of the congress Lenin expressed the hope that "notwithstanding your lofty title you will not forget the main thing, namely, that it is necessary to promote in a practical manner the training and education of young people".³

After the Fourth Congress the ECCI elected its Presidium on 6 December 1922 as follows: G. E. Zinoviev (chairman), Clara Zetkin, N. I. Bukharin, Karl Radek, Wassil Kolaroff, Sen Katayama, Egidio Gennari, Otto Kuusinen, Alois Neurath, Ludovico-Oscar Frossard, Arthur MacManus, and L. A. Shatskin. A Secretariat of the ECCI was also elected, consisting of Wassil Kolaroff, (general secretary), Walter Stöcker, I. A. Pyatnitsky, with Otto Kuusinen and Mátyás Rákosi as candidate members. The Third Enlarged Plenum on 23 June 1923 replaced Gennari by Amadeo Bordiga, and Frossard by Boris Souvarine, while Alois Neurath replaced Stöcker in the Secretariat.

The decisions of the Fourth Congress and Third Enlarged Plenum corresponded to the burning needs of the working class's struggle against the offensive of capital and fascism. The substantiation of the tactic of the workers' united front and the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government, and the policy of unity in the anti-fascist struggle were an important stage in the development of the strategy and tactics of the revolutionary labour movement.

¹ *Bericht über den Internationalen Friedenskongress. Abgehalten im Haag (Holland) vom 10.-15. Dezember 1922, unter den Auspizien des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes, IFTU, Amsterdam, 1923*; B.A. Karpachev, *The RILÜ in the Fight to Implement Lenin's Tactic of a United Front (1921-1923)*, Saratov, 1976, pp. 26-29 (in Russian).

² R. Chitarow, *Der Kampf um die Massen. Vom 2.—zum 5. Weltkongress der K.J.I.*, Verlag der KJI, Berlin, 1939, pp. 31-38.

³ V.I. Lenin, "To the Third Congress of the Young Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 446.

Chapter 11

THE FORMATION OF THE USSR. REVOLUTIONARY BATTLES IN EUROPE

RESTORATION OF THE ECONOMY AND THE UNIFICATION OF THE SOVIET REPUBLICS

The Eleventh Congress of the RCP(B), which was held in March-April 1922, summed up the results of the first year of the new economic policy. Lenin, pointing out that the retreat had finished and that a regrouping of forces was beginning, stressed that competition with capitalism was a serious business, that the Communists needed to put the economy to rights, and organise production and trade in an efficient manner. In that connection, he said, "the key feature is people, the proper choice of people", and checking up on the implementing of decisions taken.¹

When closing the Congress he noted that the Party, which had known how to mount "a supremely bold, swift and determined onslaught on the enemy", had retreated, when necessary, on the whole in revolutionary order. Now the job was "to advance as an immeasurably wider and larger mass, and only together with the peasantry, proving to them by deeds, in practice, by experience, that we are learning, and that we shall learn to assist them, to lead them forward. In the present international situation, in the present state of the productive forces of Russia, this problem can be solved only very slowly, cautiously, in a business-like way, and by testing a thousand times in a practical way every step that is taken."²

The new economic policy had had a favourable effect on Soviet Russia's economy. The peasants had gradually begun to increase the area sown. The good harvest of 1922 to a certain extent helped overcome the consequences of the crop failures of the preceding years. In the spring of 1924 the area under cereals was back to 80 per cent of prewar. The gross output of large-scale industry had nearly doubled compared with 1921. The volume of production of

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 303, 308.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 325-326.

basic industries was above 40 per cent of prewar, output of coal 44 per cent, and of oil 57 per cent. The first power stations of the GOELRO Plan (in Kashira, Red October near Petrograd and in Kiselovsk) had started up, and several others were being built. The total capacity of the operating power stations had reached 1,230 megawatts, which was higher than in tsarist Russia. But restoration of the steel industry was proceeding slowly: in 1923 production was less than 20 per cent of the prewar level for pig iron, steel, and rolled metal. That was holding back development of the engineering industries. Production of the simplest farm implements and consumer goods had been got going. In transport car-loadings were approaching 40 per cent of the 1913 level.¹

The ranks of the working class were being restored at the same time as the economy. The number of factory workers fell a little at first, it is true, in connection with the concentration of production and transition to profit-and-loss accounting, and because of the dire consequences of the civil war and famine. If their size in 1920 is taken as 100, the index for 1921 was 96.9, for 1922 92.5, and reached 117.3 only in 1922-23.² In the first years it was mainly the skilled workers who returned to the factories, the ones who had left during the war years; in 1922 workers who had gone back to the land began to arrive. Nearly half a million industrial workers demobilised from the Red Army also returned.³ At the same time there was a fall in the numbers of casual workers who had been taken on in factories under labour conscription. All this helped improve the composition of the working class. In the three biggest engineering works in the Ukraine, for example, (those in Kharkov, Lugansk, and Torets) the proportion of skilled workers had risen to 56.5 per cent by October 1, 1923. A similar position had been reached in the works of the South Ukrainian Engineering Trust.⁴

The economic progress was largely the result of the rise in the working class's political and labour activity. Right at the start of the restoration period various production cells had begun to be formed on the initiative of the workers themselves (circles, production conferences, and other organisations through which advanced workers took part in the management of industry). Initially, however, they embraced a very narrow stratum of workers and did not yet

¹ Central Statistical Board of the USSR. *Results of the Decade of Soviet Government in Figures, 1917-1927*, Moscow, 1927, p. 232; see also *The Industry of the USSR. A Statistical Handbook*, Moscow, 1964, p. 231 (all in Russian).

² *Changes in Numbers and Composition of the Soviet Working Class*, Moscow, 1961, pp. 9, 13 (in Russian).

³ A.A. Matyugin, *The Working Class of the USSR in the Years of Economic Reconstruction (1921-1925)*, Moscow, 1962, pp. 212, 214-216 (in Russian).

⁴ G.D. Didenko, *The Working Class of the Ukraine during Restoration of the Economy (1921-1925)*, Kiev, 1962, pp. 172-173 (in Russian).

acquire a truly mass character. Gradually a system of production meetings took shape, among whose members experienced, veteran workers predominated. They actively discussed the accounts and reports of the works managements, put forward their own proposals for improving the work of mills and factories, and sought out new opportunities to rationalise production, improve labour productivity, reduce absenteeism, lower costs, save raw materials and fuel, and so on.

Many difficulties arose during restoration of the economy. Industry could not meet the rural areas' growing demand for goods. Their prices began to rise, while those of farm produce, which was increasing in amount, fell. This divergence of prices—the so-called scissors—became particularly big in the autumn of 1923. It was made worse by the mistaken drive of certain managers to achieve loss-free production in industry by raising sale prices, and also by the fact that the NEP bourgeoisie, who had a strong position in retail trade (more than 75 per cent of the retail turnover in 1922-1923 was financed by private capital), fixed speculative prices for goods in short supply. The peasants proved unable to get the industrial items they needed, while industry began to experience marketing difficulties, which aggravated the problem of circulating funds, reduced production, and delayed payment of wages. In some enterprises labour conflicts arose that began to develop into strikes through the activity of hostile elements.¹

The disproportions which arose in the development of industry and agriculture interfered with organisation of the economic alliance of town and country. Immediate measures were needed to eliminate them. The Twelfth Party Congress, in April 1923, the first to be held without Lenin, but guided by him, tackled all the problems from the standpoint of consolidating the alliance of the working class and peasantry. It noted that there "were the first signs of a beginning economic revival. A period of a refining and concretising of methods of management under NEP was beginning". Agriculture would be the basis of the economy for a long time yet, but at the same time the working class "was making very vigorous efforts to raise state industry in the cities, especially heavy industry, which alone can be a firm foundation for the real building of socialism."² The Congress defined measures to regulate taxation of peasant households along the lines of passing to a single farm tax with partial substitution of cash for the tax in kind. It recommended consolidating the planned basis of the main means of production belonging

¹ *History of the CPSU*, Vol. 4, Part 1, Moscow, 1970, pp. 266-67, 293-94 (in Russian).

² *The 12th Congress of the RCP(B). April 17-25, 1923, Verbatim Report*, Moscow, 1968, p. 671 (in Russian).

to the state (in industry and transport), noted that administrative methods should not be substituted for economic methods of guidance, and recommended trusts "to avoid strangling centralisation, stifling of initiative, and mechanical encroachment" on the working of enterprises.¹

Acting on a report by Felix Dzerzhinsky (who soon after became Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council), the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee held in September 1923 set up a commission to work out and urgently implement measures to stop the catastrophic divergence of prices and to normalise the payment of wages. Steps were taken to extend the Gosplan's powers and functions, organise state trade, and strengthen the cooperatives (including restoration of the principle of voluntary membership). A money reform aimed at stabilising the currency was begun. Public control over market forces, and the fight against profiteering were stepped up and the marketing difficulties overcome. Industry and agriculture soon began to expand production again.²

The situation within the Party was complicated by the fact that the remnants of the earlier defeated opposition groupings united around Trotsky and the "platform of the 46", again revived in the conditions of economic difficulties and Lenin's illness. They made accusations against the Central Committee, saying that the Party apparatus had been bureaucratised, and treating the new economic policy as a continuous retreat and sliding onto the rails of capitalism. The opposition saw the source of funds to finance industrialisation in exploitation of the peasantry. This idea would have led inevitably to breach of the alliance of the working class and labouring peasantry and the very foundations of Soviet power. The discussion imposed on the Party ended in complete defeat of the opposition. The 13th Party Conference in January 1924 stressed that the Trotskyite opposition was "not only an attempt to revise Bolshevism, a direct departure from Leninism, but also a clearly expressed *petty-bourgeois deviation*".³ The 13th Party Congress confirmed that decision.

An integral part of the Party's work to restore and boost the economy continued to be persistent, daily struggle to normalise political and economic relations with capitalist countries. "We did not invent the barbed wire of economic blockade," G. V. Chicherin said in July 1921 to a correspondent of *L'Humanité*. While Great Britain was looking for ways of normalising relations with the RSFSR, France was not taking such steps. As Chicherin remarked ironically: "Our road has coincided with Lloyd George's. Both he and we, as the English say, want peace and trade. Only our outlooks on the future

¹ *The 12th Congress of the RCP (B) ...*, pp. 680-82, 688-89.

² *History of the CPSU*, Vol. 4, Part 1, pp. 294-296.

³ *The CPSU in Resolutions...*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1953, p. 782 (in Russian).

are different. We want the collapse of the capitalist system. Lloyd George hopes to tame us." While France remained the citadel of the blockade system, "there is nothing for French businessmen or industrialists to hope for from us. We do not want to ease the burden of the mistakes of their government for French capitalists.... Let France follow Britain's example, and it will get the maximum benefit."¹

The capitalist governments, however, strained to exploit Soviet Russia's economic difficulties, especially during the famine of 1921, for new attempts to interfere in its internal affairs and overthrow Soviet government. First of all the French and US governments demanded recognition of the tsarist debts. The Soviet Government, wanting to start negotiations, agreed to make certain concessions.

A note to the governments of Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and the USA of 28 October 1921, approved by the Political Bureau of the RCP(B) Central Committee, with amendments by Lenin,² said: "The Soviet Government declares that it is its firm conviction that no nation is obliged to pay the cost of the chains that it has borne for centuries. But the Russian Government is ready, in its unshakable resolve to reach complete agreement with the other powers, to make a number of substantial, significant concessions." The point was the possibility of recognition of the tsarist government's prewar loans on condition that counterclaims be taken into account, hostile acts stopped, and the Soviet Republic fully recognised, for which it was proposed that an international conference be convened. The Note also said that the Soviet Government had "re-established private trade and private ownership of small businesses, the right of concessions and of rent for large businesses... is granting foreign capital legal guarantees and an adequate share of profits... is striving for economic agreements with all powers."³

Only in January 1922 did the representatives of the Entente countries, meeting in Cannes, decide to convene an economic and financial conference of heads of government in Genoa and invite also Soviet Russia, Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria. The first point of the terms for convening this conference read that no government could dictate to another its system of property, internal economic affairs, or administration. Lenin saw this declaration as *de facto* recognition by the West of the possibility of the coexistence of capitalist and communist property. He called for propagandist use of this proposition against the other conditions (guarantees for foreign

¹ *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1960, pp. 235-36, 240-41 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin "Note to G.V. Chicherin and Remarks on a Draft Soviet Government Declaration on Debt Recognition", *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, pp. 356-58.

³ *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, pp. 446-47.

property and compensation for losses, recognition of all government debts and obligations) by which the capitalist powers were trying to impose their will on the Soviet Republic.¹

The All-Russia Central Executive Committee, welcoming the calling of the Genoa Conference, appointed a delegation headed by Lenin, who then delegated his authority to the People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, G. V. Chicherin. The representatives of the other Soviet republics empowered the RSFSR to look after their interests. Lenin not only guided all the activity of the Soviet delegation, in spite of his illness, during the preparations for and meeting of the conference, but also expressed, in notes and talks, a host of fundamental considerations about both the international situation and peaceful coexistence and the tasks and methods of Soviet diplomacy.

The delegation would go to Genoa, he said, "as merchants", because Russia needed trade with the capitalist countries, and they with it; "*We shall go to the merchants and agree to do business, continuing our policy of concessions; but the limits of these concessions are already defined.*"² He attached great significance to the split in the capitalists' front, which was divided into three groups: those trying to impose crippling terms on Soviet Russia, those interested in agreement, and the pacifists. He warmly supported the programme proposed by Chicherin envisaging the calling of a World Congress of all nations, including the colonial peoples, with participation of workers' organisations. This Congress should proclaim the principles of non-interference in the domestic affairs of nations, of their sovereignty, full equality, and voluntary cooperation, of universal disarmament, the banning of certain types of weapon, aid for less-developed countries, etc.³

At the first plenary session of the Genoa Conference on April 10, 1922, Chicherin said in a statement: "Whilst remaining faithful to communist principles, the Russian delegation recognises that in the present epoch, which permits of the parallel existence of the old and of the new, nascent social system, economic cooperation between the states representing these two systems of ownership is imperatively necessary for general economic reconstruction." The problem was so broad and immeasurable that it could only be resolved given the readiness of all countries to take part. The economic revival of Russia, which possessed inexhaustible natural wealth, was an important part and condition of general postwar revival.

¹ V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, pp. 451, 476; Vol. 42, pp. 401-404.

² V.I. Lenin, "The International and Domestic Situation of the Soviet Republic", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 225.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Letter to G.V. Chicherin", *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, pp. 506-12.

"Bearing in mind the needs of the world economy and the development of its productive forces," the statement said, "the government of Russia is prepared to open its borders for international transit and to make available millions of dessiatines of fertile soil, as well as rich timber, coal, and mining concessions." In addition, with a view to buttressing peace, Chicherin said, the Russian delegation intends "to move a proposal for a general reduction of armaments and to support all proposals designed to lighten the burden of militarism, to reduce the armies of all states and to supplement the rules of warfare with a total ban on its more barbarian forms, such as poison gases, air warfare, and so on, and especially the use of means of destruction against the civilian population".¹

Chicherin's speech was listened to with great attention and interest and had a broad response in the press. But the proposals on disarmament were immediately rejected sharply by the spokesman of France, Louis Barthou, ironically by Lloyd George. During the subsequent debates in commissions the Soviet delegation presented counter-claims to the Western powers in response to their demands for Soviet Russia to pay the debts of the tsarist and Provisional governments, the interest on them, and compensation for the losses suffered by foreign entrepreneurs through the nationalisation of enterprises, etc. (to a total of 18 billion gold roubles). In a well-documented study the losses caused the Soviet country by foreign military intervention and the economic blockade were set at a total of 39 billion gold roubles.²

When it became clear that Britain and France had no intention of coming to a real agreement, the RSFSR delegation signed the Treaty of Rapallo with Germany, after short negotiations, on April 16, 1922. Both countries mutually declined compensation for war expenditure and losses, and any claims, and established diplomatic and trade relations. The treaty, which Lenin had recommended declaring "the only specimen" of acceptable agreements with capitalist countries,³ meant a breach of the economic and political blockade for Soviet Russia, and for Germany was the first equal agreement since the end of the war. Its signing had the effect of a bomb blast on the Conference.

Although no other agreements were reached at the Genoa Conference, it showed that Soviet diplomacy had been able to defend the interests of the Soviet Republic in the first public international duel.

¹ *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. 5, Moscow, 1961, pp. 191-93 (in Russian).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 293-359.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Telegram to G.V. Chicherin", *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, p. 541-42.

The conference of economic experts in The Hague in June-July 1922 was a continuation of the Genoa Conference. A pack of former owners of nationalised enterprises went to it, in addition to diplomats. Although the Soviet delegation expressed readiness to conclude concrete agreements, the oil concerns, convinced that they would not succeed in making the Soviet Republic capitulate, broke up the work of the conference.

The drive of reactionary circles to aggravate the situation was again intensified in 1923. Britain succeeded in excluding Soviet Russia from equal participation in the Lausanne Conference on the Near East, and imposed a convention on the Straits on Turkey that opened them to the warships of non-Black Sea countries. In the situation of increasing inter-imperialist contradictions, which led to the Ruhr conflict and the danger of a new European war, attempts were made to put new pressure on the Soviet Republic. On May 8, for instance, Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Minister, presented an ultimatum demanding compensation for the shooting of a British spy and arrest of others, and the recall of the Soviet ambassadors from Afghanistan and Iran for allegedly being engaged in "anti-British propaganda". The Curzon Ultimatum evoked an anti-Soviet flurry in the capitalist world, of which V. V. Vorovsky, a prominent Soviet diplomat and the representative of the RSFSR at the Lausanne Conference, was a victim, shot by a whiteguard. And a British warship was sent to the White Sea.

The danger of a new anti-Soviet intervention caused disquiet; France did not support the demarche of British imperialism, and the British labour movement protested to the government threatening a general strike. The Government of the RSFSR firmly rejected the false accusations, and the "language of ultimatums". In a report on 1923 Chicherin wrote: "Curzon's May ultimatum was our enemies' biggest attempt ... to weaken our international position, but it demonstrated, on the contrary, the firmness of the position we had already achieved."¹

The Soviet Government as before exerted great efforts to develop trade relations. In 1922 the RSFSR was trading with 18 countries and in 1923 with 23. Trade was biggest with Great Britain, Germany the Baltic countries, the Netherlands, and Turkey. All trade links were forged on the basis of the statute on the foreign trade monopoly established in April 1918, a measure that reliably secured the country's independence of foreign capital and the economic expansion of imperialism, enabled foreign trade to be carried on in a planned, centralised way, in the interests of developing the national economy.

¹ *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. 6, Moscow, 1962, p. 592 (in Russian).

This measure hedged the home market from the blind fluctuations of the world capitalist economy.

Not all the leading officials of the RSFSR understood that, however. On October 6, 1922 a Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee decided, in Lenin's absence, to allow "temporary permission" for free import and export of certain goods, and the opening of a number of ports and frontiers. Lenin resolutely condemned this "breach of the foreign trade monopoly" and pointed out that the monopoly would soon yield the state a big profit in gold while opening of ports would not only increase smuggling but would also set the peasants at variance with Soviet power.¹ No customs and tariff policy, he stressed, was a substitute for the monopoly.² Lenin's point of view was wholly shared by Leonid Krasin, the People's Commissar of Foreign Trade, L. M. Khinchuk, the Chairman of Centrosoyuz, and other economic leaders. The Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of December 18, 1922 unanimously rescinded the previous decision, stressing the absolute need to preserve and organisationally consolidate the foreign trade monopoly. The issue was also considered at the 12th RCP(B) Congress, on Lenin's insistence, which categorically confirmed the "unshakeability of the foreign trade monopoly and the impermissibility of any departure from it or vacillation in implementing it".³ That was vital for maintaining Soviet Russia's independence, being as it was in a hostile capitalist encirclement.

While concentrating on foreign trade, the Soviet Government paid great attention to attracting foreign capital through concessions and mixed companies. A decree of the Council of People's Commissars of November 23, 1920⁴ said that restoring Russia's productive forces and the world economy as a whole could be substantially speeded up by drawing foreign institutions, enterprises, joint stock companies, cooperatives, and workers' organisations into mining and processing the natural wealth of Russia. It guaranteed concessionaires remuneration by a share of the product, with the right to export it; and gave a guarantee that their property would not be subject to nationalisation, confiscation, or requisition, and where special technical improvements were used promised to grant trade preferences. The decree was soon published in several languages with an appended schedule of proposed projects, and a map. The projects concerned were lumbering concessions in the north of

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Letter to J.V. Stalin for Members of the C.C., R.C.P.(B) Re the Foreign Trade Monopoly", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 375-78.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 455-59.

³ *The CPSU in Resolutions...*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1970, p. 404 (in Russian).

⁴ *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1959, pp. 338-39 (in Russian).

European Russia, arable land in Western Siberia and along the Ural River and the Don, and mining enterprises in Siberia. Oil concessions in Grozny and Baku were subsequently added. When explaining the need for such measures, Lenin stressed that it would be impossible to develop this wealth by Soviet Russia's own forces and means for a long time to come, while concessions would help "raise our technology to the modern level". Although they would cost a great deal, they would ensure rapid progress and help teach Soviet managers how to carry on production and trade. The concessions negotiations themselves had already been useful on the political plane, because they sharpened competition between the imperialist groups and countries.¹

Protracted negotiations soon began on concessions with the American Vanderlip syndicate to exploit fisheries, explore and extract oil and coal on Kamchatka and in Eastern Siberia, but the condition stipulated—*de facto* recognition of the Soviet Government—was not met by the American Administration, and the contract did not come into force.² Negotiations with J. L. Urquhart, the former owner of mines in the Urals and Siberia, one of the active instigators of foreign intervention and head of the Association of British Creditors of Russia, led to the signing of a preliminary agreement; since the volume and significance of the concession, however, necessitated normalising of relations with Britain, and Anglo-Soviet relations were deteriorating, the Council of People's Commissars did not ratify it.³ Its annulment, Lenin explained, did not mean rejection of the policy of concessions or refusal to sign future agreements with Urquhart.⁴ The Soviet Government signed 15 concession agreements in 1921-22,⁵ among others with Krupp and the Wolff consor-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 478-84; *Idem.*, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 181-183.

² V.I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Activists of the Moscow Organisation of the R.C.P.(B), December 6, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 446-48; *Idem.*, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 223.

³ *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. 5, pp. 608-609.

⁴ V. I. Lenin, "To J.V. Stalin for Members of the Politbureau of the R.C.P.(B) C.C., on Rejecting the Agreement with Leslie Urquhart", *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, pp. 565, 566; Vol. 33, pp. 387-88, 405, 439-41.

⁵ Some of the first agreements were signed with the American industrialist Armand Hammer (October-November, 1921), son and companion of an American millionaire, born in Russia. The first was for the despatch of a million poods (roughly 16,380 tonnes) of grain from the USA to Russia (in exchange for Urals precious stones, furs, hides, and other goods). Lenin considered it "Exceptionally important". The second granted Hammer's Allied Drug and Chemical Corporation a concession to work asbestos deposits in the Urals. Lenin met Hammer and wrote to him: "This is an extremely important beginning. I hope that it will

tium in Germany, the American International Barnsdoll Corporation, and Sinclair, and agreements on setting up mixed Russo-German firms (Derutra, Derumetall, Deruluft, etc.). In the spring of 1923 the Chief Concession Committee had 460 offers from Germany, Britain, the USA, France, Scandinavia, etc.¹ "I think our concessions policy is a very good one. However, we have not concluded a single profitable concession agreement so far," Lenin said in November 1922.²

The whole concatenation of the varied economic and political tasks facing Soviet government—restoration of the productive forces, consolidation of defence capability, defence of sovereignty, extension of diplomatic and trade relations with the capitalist world, and improvement of the working people's living conditions—necessitated further deepening of the cooperation of all the nations of Russia and the fraternal Soviet republics. There was an urgent need to pool the economic, political, and military resources, and efforts of all the working people to achieve their common goals. Soviet Russia had already created reliable forms of building national statehood, but they had to be improved.

During the civil war, after the defeat of Denikin, Lenin had already explained to the workers and peasants of the Ukraine: "We want a *voluntary* union of nations—a union which precludes any coercion of one nation by another—a union founded on complete confidence, on a clear recognition of brotherly unity, on absolutely voluntary consent. Such a union cannot be effected at one stroke; we have to work towards it with the greatest patience and circumspection, so as not to spoil matters and not to arouse distrust, and so that the distrust inherited from centuries of landowner and capitalist oppression, centuries of private property and the enmity caused by its divisions and redivisions may have a chance to wear off."³

He stressed the complexity of overcoming the consequences of national inequality, past strife, and national seclusion and prejudices. Lenin pointed out that Soviet power above all gave "all the non-Russian nationalities *their own* republics or autonomous regions".⁴ The RSFSR, which was a multinational federation, had got great experience in national-state, economic, and cultural devel-

be of immense significance." (see V.I. Lenin "To Armand Hammer", *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, pp. 337, 362, 368, 542-44; 559-60; See also *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. 4, pp. 442-44, 465-71.

¹ *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. 5, p. 724.

² V.I. Lenin, "Fourth Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 425.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Letter to the Workers and Peasants of the Ukraine Apropos of the Victories over Denikin", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 293.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 53.

opment, was strictly guided by the principles of internationalism, equal rights of nations, big and small, and patient help for backward nationalities. More and more new autonomous republics were being founded within the RSFSR in 1919 to 1922 (the Bashkir, Tatar, Karelian, Kirghiz, Mountaineer, Daghestan, and Crimean ASSRs) and autonomous regions (Chuvash, Vot, Mari, Kalmyk, Komi, Buryat-Mongolian, Kabardino-Balkar, Yakut, Oirot, Chechen and Karachai-Circassian).

The RSFSR had established close military and political relations with the independent Soviet Republics of the Ukraine and Byelorussia. As a result of an anti-feudal people's democratic revolution, supported by the Red Army, a Khorezm People's Republic had been founded on the territory of the Khiva Khanate in February 1920. In October the Bokhara People's Soviet Republic (also a transitional stage to a socialist republic) had been formed. They concluded treaties of alliance with the RSFSR, and military-political and economic agreements that provided for aid for these very backward areas.

The liberation of Transcaucasia had begun in 1920. In April the Musavatist government in Azerbaijan had been overthrown by an armed uprising organised by Communists, and an independent Soviet Socialist Republic had been proclaimed. An uprising in Armenia in November 1920 against the Dashnak government had been successful, and power had passed to the Soviets. The Menshevik government in Georgia had held out longer, but had fallen in February 1921 to the blows of the insurgent people, supported by the other Soviet republics. All the Transcaucasian republics signed treaties of cooperation with the RSFSR, based on the Leninist principles of the sovereignty and equality of nations; the voluntarily accepted obligations served the common aims of struggle for socialism.

The Russian people and the Russian working class had shouldered the utmost responsibility for success of the unification movement and the building of socialism. The workers of Central Russia were the most numerous and best organised, most conscious and advanced contingent of the Russian proletariat. One of their most important historical tasks, therefore, was to help the working people of those republics and regions that lagged behind in economic, social, and cultural development. When organising this help the Party started from the premise that it was possible for backward countries that had not reached the capitalist stage to pass to the Soviet system and, after a certain stage, to socialism, relying on the all-round support of the victorious proletariat.¹ This road was being tested in practice for the first time in history.

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 244-45.

The problems of building national states were discussed at the Tenth Congress of the RCP(B). The policy of tsarism, the big landowners, and the bourgeoisie towards the non-Russian nations, the resolution said, had been: "to crush any rudiments of statehood among them, to cripple their culture, to restrict their language, to keep them in ignorance, and finally, where possible, to Russify them. The results of that policy were the underdevelopment and political backwardness of these nations". The overcoming of the actual national inequality, founded on historically formed economic inequality, called for "a persistent, steady fight against all survivals of national oppression and colonial slavery". That task could be tackled primarily by planned planting of industry in the peripheral lands, by transferring factories to the sources of raw materials, and by the training of national cadres of the working class. The Congress proposed to draw "the comparatively few native proletarian elements working in the various industries, mines, railways, salt works, and kulak farms", into the Party and the work of Soviets. The native working people needed help to pass from a nomadic way of life to agriculture, and from craft industries to factory production, while avoiding any mechanical imitation of the models of Central Russia with its higher level of economic development.¹

The course mapped out by the Congress for the further coming together of the nations inhabiting Soviet Russia could only be successfully implemented given special vigilance against any display of, or deviation towards, Great Russian chauvinism. Lenin wrote in this respect, in regard to the national contradictions arising in Turkestan: "It is terribly important for our whole *Weltpolitik* to win the confidence of the natives; to win it over again and again; to prove that we are *not* imperialists, that we shall *not* tolerate any deviations in that direction.

"This is a worldwide question, and that is no exaggeration. There you must be especially strict. It will have an effect on India and the East; it is no joke, it calls for exceptional caution."²

In a letter to the Communists of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Daghestan, and the Mountaineer Republic he expressed the hope that their close alliance would serve as "a model of national peace, unprecedented under the bourgeoisie and impossible under their system". That was particularly important, since the republics of Transcaucasia had not long before (when under the rule of Mensheviks, Musavatists, and Dashnaks) been drawn into bloody, internecine wars. Lenin drew attention, as well, to the need to allow for their special position as compared with the RSFSR. They should,

¹ *The Tenth Congress of the RCP(B). March 1921. Verbatim Report*, Moscow, 1963, pp. 603, 604-605 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "To A.A. Joffe, 13.IX, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 45, p. 298.

he wrote, "refrain from copying our tactics, but thoughtfully vary them in adaptation to the differing concrete conditions". What was needed here was a "more cautious and more systematic transition to socialism". It was necessary to display "more moderation and caution, and show more readiness to make concessions to the petty bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, and particularly the peasantry". Also important was to broadly, boldly, and warily develop a policy of concessions to and trade with foreign countries to boost the area's productive forces—mineral wealth, electricity, and irrigation. All that would "revive the area and regenerate it, bury the past and make the transition to socialism more certain".¹

The treaty relations between the Soviet republics provided for the operation of joint People's Commissariats of War, Foreign Trade, Finance, and Labour. Common functions were also performed for all the republics by the Supreme Economic Council and other economic agencies. However, life laid bare the insufficiency and weak aspects of these relations. There was no precise regulation of the relations between their supreme authorities. The links between the joint People's Commissariats were complicated and involved. There was a vagueness in the republics' financial relations, and the problems of planning had not been solved. The need to find new forms of closer political and economic cooperation of the independent republics was becoming more and more obvious.

An important step towards new forms of alliance was the formation of the Transcaucasian Federation. Because the national question was particularly acute there, it was advisable to unite Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia in a federal state so as to overcome the aftermath of tsarism's great power policy and of the policies pursued by the bourgeois nationalist governments, and in order to start building socialism. Economically Transcaucasia was a single unit, and the breaking of links by the nationalist governments had done great harm to the economy. The interests of restoring the economy governed the decision of the Central Committees of the Communist Parties in April 1921 to unite the management of their railways.² Two months later an agreement was signed on forming a joint People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade. The Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP(B) soon resolved to form a Caucasian Economic Bureau, and on November 2 it concluded that a federal union would be expedient.

This matter was raised for discussion in the Political Bureau of

¹ V.I. Lenin, "To the Comrades Communists of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Daghestan and the Mountaineer Republic", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 316-18.

² S.V. Kharbandaryan, *Lenin and the Establishment of the Transcaucasian Federation. 1921-1923*, Erevan, 1969, pp. 126-33 (in Russian).

the RCP(B) on November 29, 1921. Lenin, having received a note from Stalin the evening before, recognised a federation to be absolutely correct and necessary. At the same time, he pointed out that "its immediate practical realisation must be regarded as premature",¹ and proposed therefore that things should not be rushed and that the Central Committees of the Communist Parties be advised "to put the issue of a federation up for discussion by the Party and the masses of the workers and peasants, carry out a vigorous propaganda campaign for federation, and discuss the issue at a Congress of Soviets in each republic; and in the event of major opposition to inform the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP(B) immediately".² These instructions, adopted by the Political Bureau, were all the more important since there were many who were against forming a federation in Azerbaijan and especially in Georgia, including members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia (B. G. Mdivani's group).

After preliminary work the First Congress of Communist Organizations of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia was convened in February 1922, which unanimously resolved to form a federation, and condemned nationalist deviations. On March 12 a plenipotentiary conference of the Central Executive Committees of the three republics signed a treaty on their federative alliance. This alliance was later converted into the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (TSFSR). The idea of a Soviet federation uniting independent republics was thus realised for the first time in Soviet national-state development. The experience proved useful when ways of uniting all the Soviet republics were being explored.³

In the spring of 1922 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine appealed to the Central Committee of the RCP(B) to make the character of the treaty relations between the RSFSR and the Ukraine more precise. The commission set up under the chairmanship of M. V. Frunze came to the conclusion that the matter needed to be tackled in a comprehensive way. A plenary session of the Transcaucasian Territorial Committee of the RCP(B), and the Central Bureau of the Communist Party of Byelorussia also separately raised the issue of making federal relations with the RSFSR more concrete. The Central Committee of the RCP(B) set up a special commission in August 1922 that included representatives of all the republics, to go into the matter of the relations between the RSFSR and the independent, national Soviet republics.

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Memo to J.V. Stalin with the Draft Decision of the Political Bureau of the C.C. R.C.P.(B) on the Formation of a Federation of Transcaucasian Republics", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 319.

² V.I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, 5th Russian Edition, Vol. 44, p. 566.

³ S.V. Kharbandaryan, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-40.

By this time it had become clear that the need to unite all the Soviet republics in a federal state had matured. It had arisen primarily because of the tasks of developing a socialist economy and the common planned economy whose outlines had already been mapped out in the GOELRO Plan. It would be easier to tackle the improving of the financial system, level up the development of the economy, and raise the culture of the Soviet nations and nationalities, within a single state. It was also no less important to have unity of the Soviet republics vis-à-vis international imperialism, which was continuing both its military and its economic and political attempts to undermine the socialist system and destroy the integrity of the new social system, so as to restore the capitalist order.

Stalin's draft scheme, known as the "autonomisation plan", adopted by the commission on September 24, envisaged that it would be "expedient to conclude a treaty between the Soviet republics of the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, and the RSFSR on the formal entry of these republics in the RSFSR, leaving the matter of Bokhara, Khorezm, and the Far-Eastern Republic open". Not everyone agreed with this formulation, however. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia had already opposed it before it was adopted. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Byelorussia was for retention of treaty relations, while the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine had not taken a definite stand.¹

Lenin, who was in Gorki. and who first saw the commission's report on September 26, immediately wrote to the members of the Political Bureau: "In my opinion the matter is of utmost importance. Stalin tends to be somewhat hasty... Stalin has already consented to make one concession: in Clause 1, instead of 'entry' into the RSFSR, to put:

"'Formal unification with the RSFSR in a Union of Soviet Republics of Europe and Asia'.

"I hope the purport of this concession is clear: we consider ourselves, the Ukrainian SSR, and others, equal, and enter with them, on an equal basis, into a new union, a new federation."²

Lenin also proposed setting up a Federal Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Republics alongside the CEC of the RSFSR, instead of mechanically subordinating the bodies of authority of the republics to the supreme authorities of the RSFSR, stres-

¹ V.I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, 5th Russian Edition, Vol. 45, pp. 556-58; *History of the CPSU*, Vol. 4, Book I, pp. 198-200.

² V.I. Lenin, "On the Establishment of the USSR. Letter to L.B. Kamenev for Members of the Politbureau, 26. IX. 1922", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, pp. 421-22.

sing that "the important thing is not to provide material for the 'pro-independence' people, not to destroy their *independence*, but to create another *new storey*, a federation of *equal* republics".¹ He made a number of other corrections. The new solution he found for the problem came from his creative development of Marxist theory about the building of national states, with account taken of practical experience. He much regretted that he had been unable to take part in the discussion of these issues earlier, because of illness. In a letter to the Congress he dictated later he said: "I suppose I have been very remiss with respect to the workers of Russia for not having intervened energetically and decisively enough... Obviously the whole business of 'autonomisation' was radically wrong and badly timed." He saw a danger in it of encouraging "the Great-Russian chauvinist" and bureaucrat who did not want to take the national interests of the small nations fully into account. "I think," he concluded, "Stalin's haste and his infatuation with pure administration, together with his spite against the notorious 'social nationalism', played a fatal role here. In politics spite generally plays the basest of roles."²

The Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the RCP(B) decided on October 6, 1922, on the basis of Lenin's recommendations: "to recognise the need to conclude a treaty between the Ukraine, Byelorussia, the Federation of the Transcaucasian Republics, and the RSFSR on uniting them in a Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, leaving each of them the right freely to secede from the Union".³ Because he did not have the chance to take part in the Plenary Meeting, Lenin sent a note to L. B. Kamenev: "I declare war to the death on dominant nation chauvinism."⁴ He insisted that the federal (union) Central Executive Committee should be chaired in turn by a Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian, etc. The Plenary Meeting fully supported Lenin's position and instructed the new commission to draft a bill on formation of the USSR. The commission took all Lenin's advice into account, and also Kalinin's suggestion to make an all-Union Congress of Soviets the supreme authority of the Union, which would elect the federal CEC. The Plenum's decision

¹ *Ibid*, p. 422.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Question of Nationalities or 'Autonomisation'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, pp. 605-606. Initially Stalin's attitude to the criticism was incorrect, he even regarded Lenin's position as "national liberalism" and defended conversion of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee of the RSFSR into a federal Central Executive Committee. But on realising that the Central Committee would support Lenin, he quickly revised the commission's draft in accordance with all of Lenin's suggestions.

³ *The CPSU in Resolutions...*, Vol. 2, p. 401.

⁴ V.I. Lenin "Memo to the Political Bureau on Combating Dominant Nation Chauvinism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 372.

was approved by the Central Committees of the republican Communist parties.

The idea of forming the USSR was greeted by the working people of the Soviet republics with great enthusiasm. A special declaration of the Seventh Kharkov Provincial Congress of Soviets, addressed to the Seventh All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets, said: "There is not a village, not an enterprise in the Ukraine where this proposal would not be met with great joy. But the resolution of the Congress of Soviets on the founding of a Union of Soviet Republics will be met with even greater joy."¹

There was also unanimous support for the idea in the Byelorussian SSR. The newspaper *Zvezda* (Star) wrote, summing up the discussion: "Judging by the resolutions passed at district congresses, and taking into consideration the numerous resolutions of workers' and peasants' meetings, there can hardly be any doubt that the congress will unanimously approve the plan for a closer union of the republics."²

An active mass movement in support of the founding of a Soviet Union developed in the Transcaucasian Republics. A letter reached the Second Conference of Communist Organisations of Transcaucasia, which said: "Communist metal workers consider that joint work of the Communist Parties of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia will strengthen our communist work in Transcaucasia, knit the workers of all three republics closer together in one comradely family, and speed up the unification of the Transcaucasian Federation with the other Soviet lands in one, powerful Union of Soviet Republics."³ The newspaper *Bakinskii rabochii* (Baku Worker) noted that "the closest union of the Soviet Republics has come onto the agenda as the most important, urgent task of the worker and peasant masses; the Baku proletariat has been one of the first in the whole federation to set itself this task".⁴

In December 1922 congresses of Soviets of the RSFSR, the Ukraine, Byelorussia, and the Transcaucasian Federation, and then the First All-Union Congress of Soviets passed resolutions on the forming of the USSR. The All-Union Congress adopted a Declaration and Union Treaty, and elected the supreme legislative body, the Central Executive Committee of the USSR. The founding of the multinational Soviet Union was a direct continuation of the October Revolution, practical realisation of Lenin's idea of a voluntary union of free nations, and the triumph of his nationalities policy. In his

¹ *The USSR during the Economic Restoration Period (1921-1925)*, Moscow, 1955, p. 253 (in Russian).

² *Zvezda*, December 14, 1922.

³ *Zarya Vostoka*, November 18, 1922.

⁴ *Bakinskii rabochii*, October 2, 1922.

closing speech at the Congress M. I. Kalinin gave a profound estimate of the significance of the step taken: "First, this unification congress gives us the chance to strengthen our material resources as a counterweight to the hostile capitalist world. Second, the uniting of the Soviet republics also enormously increases the real significance of the Soviet republics politically in face of the whole capitalist world. And finally, we have laid the foundation stone here of a real, fraternal community. For whole millennia the best brains of humanity have toiled and moiled on the theoretical problem in search of forms that would give nations the chance to live in friendship and fraternity without enormous suffering and mutual struggle. Only now, today, has the first stone in this direction been laid in practice."¹

The successful tackling of the national question in the Soviet country has acquired enormous international significance. The Soviet experience has become a beacon for the oppressed peoples of the world fighting for national independence, and has demonstrated the great advantages of socialism over capitalism in this sphere too.

The formation of the USSR was the worthy result of the first five years of the existence of Soviet power. In spite of all the storms, misfortunes, and dangers, the power born of the revolution had not only stood but had also rallied the working people of multinational Russia in a single powerful Soviet Union. In his report *Sixty Years of the USSR*, Yuri Andropov said: "Lenin's behests and his principles underlying the policy in the nationalities question are sacred to us. Relying on and steadfastly asserting them in practice we have created a powerful state, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, whose formation was not only a major step in the development of socialism but also a crucial turning point in world history."²

LENIN ON THE WORLD REVOLUTION AND THE BUILDING OF SOCIALISM IN THE USSR

In the middle of December 1922 a new attack of grave illness confined Lenin for a long time to his bed. The doctors, fearing for his life, forbade him any work, reading papers, or seeing friends. But no sooner had the illness abated a little than he again returned to work. At the end of December, and in January, and later in March 1923, he dictated his last articles and letters, which formed the

¹ *First Congress of Soviets of the USSR. Verbatim Report*, Moscow, 1922, p. 24 (in Russian).

² Yu.V. Andropov, *Sixtieth Anniversary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1983, pp. 10-11.

leader's political testament. Straining every nerve he hurried to share the ideas and considerations he thought most important for the future with Party comrades. The chief ones, which formed the main background of all his arguments and counsel, were his thoughts on the future course of the world revolutionary process and the place of the Russian revolution, and its offspring—the Soviet Republic, in it.

Even in the premonition of death Lenin had no doubts that the road chosen had been correct, the only possible one, although there had been much that could be unforeseen, extremely complicated, and exceptionally difficult about it. Nor were there any shadows of regret or waverings about whether it had been necessary "to take up arms", run risks, or shoulder the enormous burden of responsibility for the fate of humankind. Indomitable was his conviction of the truth of Marx's prevision of the world socialist revolution as a general law of development, as the door leading to a new society, and to a system of social justice, i.e., to socialism and communism. At the same time his conviction was just as unwavering that the decisive, intransient thing in Marxism was its revolutionary dialectics, alien to any schematicism, that envisaged the inevitability of various forms and paths of the movement of world history, including the possibility of a modification of the "ordinary" historical order.

In late December when he was looking through N. Sukhanov's recently published *Notes on the Revolution*, who slavishly followed in Kautsky's footsteps, Lenin—who was always, like Marx, first and foremost—a revolutionary, recalled Napoleon's words "*on s'engage et puis ... on voit*" (join battle and then ... we'll see), and continued: "Well, we did first engage in a serious battle in October 1917, and then saw such details of development (from the standpoint of world history they were certainly details) as the Brest peace, the New Economic Policy, and so forth. And now there can be no doubt that in the main we have been victorious." But Mensheviks like Sukhanov, he concluded in a broad generalisation, "never even dream that *revolutions cannot be made otherwise*".¹ (Our italics.—Auth.)

Returning to his old idea that no revolution is possible without boldness, initiative, and fantasy, he drew attention to the fact that "really great revolutions grow out of the contradictions between the old, between what is directed towards developing the old, and the very abstract striving for the new, which must be so new as not to contain the tiniest particle of the old".² This revolutionary enthusiasm and striving towards the future, this enthusiasm for repudiat-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Our Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 480.

² V.I. Lenin, "Better Fewer, but Better", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 497.

ing the old and creating the new, was a powerful stimulus of advance. But these features had necessarily to be united with sober calculation and realistic consideration of the situation, and with understanding of the impossibility of simply skipping unresolved tasks and immature conditions in the realms of the economy, civilisation, and culture. In these matters, he dictated, "haste and sweeping measures are most harmful";¹ here "we must show sound scepticism for too rapid progress, for boastfulness, etc".²

Lenin also considered the real process of the movement of the world revolution itself, and the limited character and onesidedness of the reformist approach to revolution, through the prism of this dialectically contradictory unity of opposites. Kautsky, Sukhanov, and other petty-bourgeois democrats who called themselves Marxists, understood Marxism in an "impossibly pedantic" manner³. They even passed over Marx's direct indications of the need to display the maximum flexibility during the revolution, of the possibility, for example, of uniting a peasant war and the workers' revolution. They could not even imagine that the West European path of capitalism's development and bourgeois democracy could only be considered a world, universal model *mutatis mutandis*. They were incapable of understanding that a revolution that had grown out of imperialist world war inevitably had to have new features, or ones altered by the war. The idea was also quite foreign to them that "while the development of world history as a whole follows general laws it is by no means precluded, but, on the contrary, presumed, that certain periods of development may display peculiarities in either the form or the sequence of this development".⁴ (Our italics—Auth.) They therefore did not, and could not, understand that the Russian Revolution was the first act of the world revolution.

Recalling the hard, grim objective alternative that history had faced Russia with in 1917—death as an independent state or a desperate, bold breakthrough to socialism—Lenin showed the actual possibility of another road, differing radically from that charted by West European Social-Democratic dogmatists. But he did not discard the main argument, the trump card of those who did not want to recognise the legitimacy of the socialist revolution in Russia. Yes, "the development of the productive forces of Russia has not attained the level which makes socialism possible", and "we are not yet ripe for socialism", yes, and we did not have all "the objective economic premises for socialism" at the time of the revolution, or the necessary level of culture and civilisation, and they were

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 487.

² *Ibid.*, p. 488.

³ See V. I. Lenin, "Our Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 476.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 477.

necessary for building socialism. But did it follow that the revolution was a mistake?

Lenin had previously posed this question more than once and had always answered it in the negative. Now he did not begin, as usual, with an explanation of the relation of the international and internal conditions for the victory of socialism, or with a survey of the system of transitional measures that would make this victory possible even in one, individual, moderately-developed country by itself in capitalist encirclement, or with an analysis of "level of culture". He approached it from quite another angle, concentrating his attention mainly on clarifying the fundamental possibility "*to create the fundamental requisites of civilisation in a different way from that of the West-European countries*", i.e. another sequence of development of the revolution not envisaged in theory in the past.¹

He formulated this possibility as follows: "If a definite level of culture is required for the building of socialism (although nobody can say just what that definite 'level of culture' is, for it differs in every West-European country), why cannot we begin by first achieving the prerequisites for that definite level of culture in a revolutionary way, and *then*, with the aid of the workers' and peasants' government and the Soviet system, proceed to overtake the other nations." He also spelled out that the main precondition of civilisation had been created by the expulsion of Russian landowners and capitalists and the establishment of proletarian power.² The circumstance that we started "from the opposite end", and that (contrary to the "theories" of all pedants) in this country "the political and social revolution preceded the cultural revolution" of course created immense, incredible difficulties. But they were quite surmountable.³

Lenin did not limit the possibility of another pattern of development to Russia. Looking to the future, he tried to make out the further movement of the *world* socialist revolution. Once more he recalled what he had previously repeatedly said, that Russia was on the boundary of civilised countries and countries that had been "definitely brought into the orbit of civilisation" for the first time, "all the Oriental, non-European countries" that were on the eve of imminent or already begun revolutions. "Our European philistines never even dream that the subsequent revolutions in Oriental countries, which possess much vaster populations and a much vaster diversity of social conditions, will undoubtedly display even greater distinctions than the Russian revolution."⁴

Turning to the prospects of the world revolution's development,

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Our Revolution", *op. cit.*, p. 478. (Our italics.—Auth.).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 478-79.

³ V.I. Lenin, "On Co-operation", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 475.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Our Revolution", *op. cit.*, pp. 477, 480.

he stressed that the inevitability of universal victory of socialism would ultimately be ensured by the fact that the vast majority of the world's population—Russia, India, China, etc., would be drawn into revolutionary struggle for their liberation with extraordinary rapidity. The development of the countries of the East was moving, on the whole, along “general European capitalist lines”, but these countries, much more backward than Russia, Orientally backward, where there was not yet an industrial proletariat, had to be civilised for their fight to become a socialist one.¹

While noting that the involvement of new hundreds of millions of people in the international revolution was providing the conditions for an immense acceleration of world development, Lenin at the same time scoffed at the claims of the “clever” Social-Democrats who deduced that “this estimate ... fails to take into account the European and American proletariat” as contingents of the revolutionary forces.² There was no diminishing the role of the advanced Western proletariat. There was something else; he considered it necessary to counterpose a distinct perspective of a genuine world, global revolution to the “Eurocentrism” of Kautsky and other reformist leaders, which was already undermined, incidentally, by the triumph of the Russian revolution.

In doing that he did not exaggerate the degree of maturity of the revolutionary movement, and of the communist groups and organisations, and those close to them that were already taking shape in the countries of the East. His advice to the delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic not to rush to “transform” the People's Revolutionary Party into a communist one was not just of significance for that country alone.³ The Fourth Congress of the Comintern recorded that the Communist Parties of the East “which are still in a more or less embryonic stage must take part in every movement that gives them access to the masses”, and that the proletariat of those countries was faced with a long preparatory work “on its own training and that of the social classes closely allied to itself”, especially the peasantry, in order to train itself for the role of political leader. The slogan of a united anti-imperialist front had also been intended to promote the revolutionary will and enhance class consciousness of the working masses in the fight against imperialism and backwardness.⁴

¹ V.I. Lenin, “Better Fewer, but Better”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 499-500.

² V. I. Lenin, “On the Tenth Anniversary of *Pravda*”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 350-51.

³ V.I. Lenin, “Talk with a Delegation of the Mongolian People's Republic”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, pp. 360-61.

⁴ *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International*, op. cit., pp. 58-59.

While foreseeing that the hundreds of millions of the people of Asia would have to "follow us on to the stage of history in the near future", and that in the broad perspective "the morrow of world history will be a day when the awakening peoples oppressed by imperialism are finally aroused and the decisive long and hard struggle for their liberation begins", Lenin again stressed the special importance of the fundamental question: "How is internationalism to be understood?"¹

A correct approach, he thought, necessitated distinguishing between "the nationalism of an oppressor nation and that of an oppressed nation, the nationalism of a big nation and that of a small nation". The former must not limit internationalism just to observance of the formal equality of nations; that was only the first step. It was absolutely necessary to go further and create "an *inequality* of the oppressor nation, the great nation, that must make up for the inequality which obtains in actual practice". He continued: "In one way or another, by one's attitude or by concession, it is necessary to compensate the non-Russians for the lack of trust, for the suspicion and the insult to which the government of the 'dominant' nation subjected them in the past." He was convinced that "nothing holds up the development and strengthening of proletarian class solidarity so much as national injustice; and 'offended' nationals are not sensitive to anything as much as to the feeling of equality and the violation of this equality, if only through negligence or jest—to the violation of that equality by their proletarian comrades." He once more repeated that inattention and a formal attitude to the national question, the least rudeness and injustice in regard to our own small nations could do immense harm not only to the USSR but also to the international liberation movement, and could undermine the "principled sincerity" so necessary for the common fight against imperialism.²

In other articles he dictated—*Pages from a Diary, On Co-Operation, Our Revolution, How We Should Reorganise the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, Better Fewer, but Better*—Lenin developed a plan for building socialist society in the USSR. Their guiding thread was the idea that the Soviet Union had everything it needed to build a full socialist society. That conclusion followed from a far-reaching analysis of the balance of class forces within the country and on the international arena. Lenin believed that the Soviet Union would be able to overcome technical, economic, and cultural backwardness by its own forces, and overtake the developed capitalist countries.

¹ V.I. Lenin, "The Question of Nationalities or 'Autonomisation'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, pp. 610, 611, 607.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 607-11.

The central idea of his plan was as follows: it was necessary to build a large-scale machine industry as the material basis of the new society; to organise economic co-operation of workers and peasants; to switch rural areas onto the rails of collective production; to organise the production and distribution of material wealth in a new way; to carry out a cultural revolution; and to develop the initiative of the masses in every way.

Lenin considered the tasks of socialist industrialisation to be a development of large-scale industry, above all heavy industry, that would ensure reconstruction of the whole economy on the basis of progressive machinery, victory of socialist economic forms, and the country's technical and economic independence. In contrast to capitalist industrialisation, socialist industrialisation is a social process in the course of which "the working class both grows numerically and moulds its new attitude to labour and its new psychology as master of production, and in which production functions and develops in new forms—without capitalists, without exploitation, under a national plan precluding crises of overproduction and anarchy in economic interconnections. And this is something the new system can not borrow from capitalism anywhere in ready form."¹

At the end of 1920 Lenin had already formulated the thesis "Communism = Soviet power + electrification" in his *Notes on Electrification*.² This implied development of the productive forces on the basis of the most modern technology, centralisation of economic management on the basis of a national plan, concentration of all the nation's forces on tackling the tasks of industrial development, and generally raising level of culture.³ "Only when the country has been electrified, and industry, agriculture and transport have been placed on the technical basis of modern large-scale industry, only then shall we be fully victorious."⁴ The peasantry would switch to socialist rails "only when you have a very powerful, large-scale industry, capable of providing the petty producer with such benefits that he will see its advantages in practice".⁵ Industrialisation had to help overcome the economic backwardness of the non-Russian areas of the country, which was a vital condition for achieving actual equality of the nations and building up the country's defence capability.

¹ Boris Ponomarev, "On the Theoretical Work of the CPSU in the 60 Years Since the October Revolution", in *World Marxist Review*, September 1977, Vol. 20, Number 9, p. 9.

² V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, pp. 280-81.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "The Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, December 22-29, 1920. Report on the Work of the Council of People's Commissars, December 22", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 516.

⁵ V.I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B), March 8-16, 1921. Speech at the Opening of the Congress, March 8", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 186.

A feature of socialist industrialisation in the USSR was that the Soviet people had to implement it in hostile capitalist encirclement, relying exclusively on the resources of their own country. That created special difficulties as regards the accumulation of funds. As Lenin stressed at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, "heavy industry needs state subsidies. If we are not able to provide them, then we are doomed as a civilised state, let alone as a socialist one".¹ The main source of funds had to be accumulation within industry and in part foreign trade. It was necessary to put the financial system on a sound basis, stabilise the rouble, organise centralised distribution of limited means, channelling them to priority projects.

The new social system could not be based on two different foundations—large-scale machine industry in the towns and backward, low-productivity, individual farming in the country. The working peasants were also interested in raising labour productivity, so that the land they had acquired during the revolutionary reforms would provide them with a higher standard of living. Lenin developed the relationship of the objective and subjective factors during the socialist transformation of peasant production in a comprehensive way. Collective labour could only effectively replace smallholders' work, he considered, when an economic need arose for such a transformation, and the material conditions developed for carrying it out. The most important economic preconditions were mechanisation of farming, and consolidation of the economic alliance of town and country. At the same time he repeatedly stressed that the petty commodity producer would not spontaneously take the socialist road of development, and that a number of transitional stages would be required for it. Socialism had to be built, "not directly relying on enthusiasm but, aided by the enthusiasm engendered by the great revolution, and on the basis of personal interest, personal incentive, and business principles".²

Lenin saw the road to transformation of the village in the development of co-operatives, both consumer and producer. In the spring of 1918 he had already written: "the position of co-operatives undergoes a fundamental change from the time of the conquest of state power by the proletariat, from the moment that the proletarian state sets about systematic creation of the socialist order. Here quantity passes into quality. The co-operative, as a small island in capitalist society, is a little shop. The co-operative, if it embraces the whole of

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Fourth Congress of the Communist International, November 5-December 5, 1922. Five Years of the Russian Revolution and the Prospects of the World Revolution. Report to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, November 13, 1922", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 426.

² V.I. Lenin, "Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 58.

society, in which the land is socialised and the factories nationalised, is socialism."¹

Coming back to that idea some five years later, he remarked, when dictating *On Co-operation*, that, nevertheless, not enough attention had been paid to co-operation, and that many practical workers still had a disdainful attitude to it. But meanwhile it was exceptionally important both from the aspect of principle, as a form of social property, and "from the standpoint of transition to the new system by means that are the *simplest, easiest, and most acceptable to the peasant*". The co-operative movement, therefore, had to be supported by all political and financial means.² Lenin's plan of organising farming co-operative envisaged voluntariness, gradualness, and the use of example and persuasion.

He applied co-operation not only to agriculture but also had the general task of raising culture in mind. Returning to the "dreams of the old co-operators", beginning with Robert Owen, he recalled that their plans of "peacefully remodelling contemporary capitalist society into socialism, without class struggle, and without overthrowing the exploiters, and without the working class's winning of political power, contained much that was fantastic and romantic. But these ideas looked quite different when state power was already in the hands of the working class and all the means of production belonged to it. Then the "system of civilised co-operators is the system of socialism". That approach meant, he considered, "a radical modification in our whole outlook on socialism", since the centre of gravity had been shifted within the country to peaceful organisational and cultural work (leaving aside the fight against international imperialism). But that was a very difficult business, and called for a whole period of cultural development of all the popular masses, even "a whole historical epoch", that might, at best, take one or two decades. Because "the organisation of the entire peasantry in co-operative societies cannot be achieved without a cultural revolution".³

Lenin understood the cultural revolution not just as a system of educational measures providing universal literacy, although that in itself was then of the utmost importance. In that connection he stressed that the schoolteacher should be "raised to a standard he has never achieved and cannot achieve in bourgeois society".⁴ The *sine qua non* for carrying out the cultural revolution, he considered, was state power of the proletariat headed by a Marxist-Leninist party, liberation of culture from the ideology of exploiter classes, a contin-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Original Version of the Article 'The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 215-16.

² V.I. Lenin, "On Co-operation", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 468.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 473, 471, 474, 470.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Pages from a Diary", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 464.

uous link with the culture of the past, the formation of a new, socialist, people's intelligentsia, overcoming of the cultural distinctions between town and country, and between mental and physical labour, unity of the socialist content and national form of culture, and internationalism and the national roots of socialist culture. An acute ideological struggle was inevitable during the cultural revolution, because a new man was being moulded during it, and with him his socialist image, humanist moral forms, and broad social interests.¹

Lenin called on the Party to exercise leadership of the cultural revolution through deep penetration into the laws of development of culture, and careful preservation of all the gains of human thought that the proletariat inherited from preceding epochs. The giddy speed characteristic of the revolutionary transition from tsarism to the Soviet system, was inapplicable in the realm of culture. The main job, he declared, was: "first to learn, secondly to learn, and thirdly to learn, and then to see to it that our learning shall not remain a dead letter, ... shall really become part of our very being ... shall actually and fully become constituent element of our social life."²

Would the Soviet Union, however, "hold out" until the advanced capitalist countries "consummate their development towards socialism"? So Lenin directly posed the very sharp question that was tormenting him. "What tactics does this situation prescribe for our country?" The international revolutionary process was clearly not following a road of even "ripening" of socialism in the developed countries. At the same time there was an intensifying of the exploitation of some countries by others, and a sharpening of all the contradictions and conflicts. In those conditions "we must display extreme caution so as to preserve our workers' government and to retain our small and very small peasantry under its leadership and authority". A regime of the greatest economy was needed; it was necessary to get rid of all traces of extravagance of any kind in all public relations, the state machinery included.

But would that not "be a reign of peasant limitations?" No, he answered: "If we see to it that the working class retains its leadership over the peasantry, we shall be able, by exercising the greatest possible thrift in the economic life of our state, to use every saving we make to develop our large-scale machine industry, to develop electrification, the hydraulic extraction of peat, to complete the Volkhov Power Project, etc." And that would make it possible figuratively "to change horses ... from the horse of an economy designed for

¹ *The Great October and the Contemporary World*, Prague, 1977, pp. 18-19 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "Better Fewer, but Better", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, pp. 488-89.

a ruined peasant country to the horse ... of large-scale machine industry, of electrification".¹

The deep conviction that "NEP Russia will become socialist Russia"² that Lenin had expressed in his last public utterance, he expressed again, as well, in the last lines of the articles he dictated. In Russia, he said, there was everything needed for building a complete socialist society, viz., the dictatorship of the proletariat, the alliance of the working class and peasantry with the leading role of the working class, and social ownership of the basic means of production. That, he added, was still not "the building of socialist society, but it is all that is necessary and sufficient for it".³

All of Lenin's last speeches, letters, and articles were imbued with concern for perfecting the Soviet state apparatus and improving party leadership of society and the state. He was convinced that the Communist Party could tackle the most complicated tasks successfully: "Our Party, a small group of people in comparison with the country's total population, has tackled this job. This tiny nucleus has set itself the task of remaking everything, and it will do so. We have proved that this is no utopia but a cause which people live by."⁴ In order to further the authority of the central bodies of the RCP(B) as the collective leaders of the Party and country, he constantly recommended a substantial broadening of the composition of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission, drawing new forces into them, above all from worker-Communists, and reorganising the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection through a kind of merging of "a Party control institution with a Soviet control institution".⁵ He considered it very important, that "the best elements that we have in our social system—such as, first, the advanced workers, and, second, the really enlightened elements for whom we can vouch that they will not take the word for the deed, and will not utter a single word that goes against their conscience—should not shrink from admitting any difficulty and should not shrink from any struggle".⁶

The question of avoiding a possible split in the Central Committee, he approached from the standpoint of the personal qualities of its leading members. In his *Letter to the Congress* he expressed political mistrust of Trotsky, and warned against the ideological instability of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, and Pyatakov. He noted that "Stalin is too rude, and this defect... becomes intolerable in a Secretary

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 499-501.

² V.I. Lenin, "Speech at a Plenary Session of the Moscow Soviet, November 20, 1922", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 443.

³ V.I. Lenin, "On Co-operation", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 468.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, "Speech at a Plenary Session of the Moscow Soviet, November 20, 1922", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 442.

⁵ V.I. Lenin, "Better Fewer, but Better", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 496.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 489.

General". He expressed the fear that Stalin, having concentrated great power in his hands, would not know how to use it properly. Lenin advised replacing him in that post by a person "who in all other respects differs from Comrade Stalin in having only one advantage, namely, that of being more tolerant, more loyal, more polite and more considerate to the comrades, less capricious, and so on".¹ The future showed how shrewdly Lenin foresaw the threatening danger.

Lenin's last speeches, articles, and letters have an outstanding place in his ideological heritage because of the wealth of the ideas in them, the importance of the theoretical propositions put forward and developed in them, and in the practical value of their advice and recommendations. The substantiation of the general line of the Communist Party given in them, and the counting on victory of socialism, determined the road of the USSR for decades ahead. History has also confirmed his forecast of the development of the world revolutionary movement.

THE REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS OF 1923 IN GERMANY

The imperialist contradictions between the victor countries and the vanquished in World War I were not eliminated by the Versailles system and sharpened markedly at the end of 1922. An open conflict began to mature between Germany and France on the soil of unsettled disputes over reparations. The Poincaré Government, straining to consolidate France's hegemony in Europe, more and more sharply expressed dissatisfaction at the dragging out of reparation payments, demanded the granting of "productive guarantees" from Germany, and threatened to apply sanctions. At the same time haggling continued between the monopolists of France and Germany (Schneider and de Wendel representing the Comité des Forges on the one hand, and the magnates of German heavy industry, headed by Hugo Stinnes, on the other) over the founding of a coal and steel concern that would unite Lorraine ore and Ruhr coal. But Stinnes demanded an end to the occupation of the Rhineland, lifting of the military restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles, and revision of reparations; the French wanted to get 60 per cent of the shares of the concern, while the Germans would agree at best to parity. The French capitalists and military took the breaking off of negotiations as the signal for action.

The German government, which had been headed since November 1922 by the General Manager of the Hamburg Lloyd shipping company, the homme de confiance of the bankers, Wilhelm Cuno, in turn,

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Letter to the Congress", *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, p. 596.

intensified nationalist propaganda. This was the most reactionary government since the November Revolution, and carried out the orders of the monopolies in both its foreign and home policy. It had taken the road of demonstrative holding back of reparation deliveries, so that Germany had only honoured its annual obligations by 84 to 88 per cent. Having challenged France, the Cuno Cabinet took steps to involve the Americans as international arbitrators.

Great Britain, favouring reduction of German reparations payments and the granting of a long-term moratorium to Germany, was pushing France at the same time to unilateral application of sanctions, considering that such actions would be unsuccessful and would weaken its French rival. The US Administration and monopolies, advocating "restoration of the German economy", proclaimed themselves supporters of an international settlement.

Reactionary circles inflamed a chauvinist war psychosis on both banks of the Rhine. The campaign was supported, with slight reservations, by German and French right-wing Socialists. Only the Communists in both countries actively opposed the danger of a new military conflict, exposing the imperialists' intrigues. On 6-7 January 1923 a joint conference of the Communist parties of Germany and France was held in Essen, the centre of the Ruhr, with the participation of Communists from Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Great Britain, Holland, and Italy. Speakers included Clara Zetkin, Walter Stoecker, Marcel Cachin, Gaston Monmousseau. The fraternal parties adopted a common action programme, and expressed their resolve to develop a most vigorous struggle against the threat to occupy the Ruhr. In their appeal to German and French proletarians, the Communists explained that the bourgeoisie of both countries were squabbling over the division of spoils, but that each intended to muzzle their own workers.¹ Reactionary nationalist and fascist organisations became more active in both Germany and France.

On January 11, 1923 French and Belgian troops entered the Ruhr and occupied Essen, Gelsenkirchen, Buer and then Bochum and Dortmund, an area with a population of nearly three million, in which 72 per cent of Germany's coal was mined, and 50 per cent of its iron and steel produced, and where around a quarter of the industrial workers of Germany were concentrated. In that way the imperialists of France and Belgium carried out their long conceived plan to seize the biggest industrial centre of Europe. It was the most acute

¹ For further details see E.L. Rabkin, *Fraternal Unity of the French and German Communist Parties in the Struggle against Militarism, Fascism and War*, Moscow, 1962 (in Russian); Heinz Köller, *Kampfbündnis an der Seine, Ruhr und Spree. Der gemeinsame Kampf der KPF und KPD gegen die Ruhrbesetzung 1923*, Rütten und Loening, Berlin, 1963, pp. 61-68.

crisis in the relations of the leading European powers since the end of the war.

While the ruling circles of Britain and the USA did not rush to settle this dangerous conflict, calculating on profiting by it, the Soviet Union had already condemned the aggression of France and Belgium on January 13. An appeal of the Central Executive Committee to the peoples of the world recalled that workers' and peasants' Russia had always protested against the "harsh folly of the Treaty of Versailles". Soviet Russia, at a time when "the world has again been plunged into a state of prewar fever" and "sparks are falling into the powder magazine", "raises its voice in indignant protest against the insane policy of imperialist France and its allies. Once more it protests with special force against suppression of the German people's right to self-determination ..., warns ... the peoples of the world of the danger of bloodshed hanging over Europe."¹ Meanwhile both the national and the social confrontation were being sharpened. The Cuno Government announced the stopping of reparation deliveries on January 13, and called on all Germans to offer "passive resistance" to the occupying forces. Mining of coal shrank and transport was paralysed. France replied by intensifying repression, and soon threw a customs cordon around the Ruhr.

The conflict was a serious test of the revolutionary and political maturity of the working classes of both countries, and their fidelity to the principles of internationalism. The German Communists, calling for united action, relied primarily on the revolutionary production councils (factory committees). In November 1922 an all-German Congress of Factory Committees, in which representatives of the SPD, USPD, and non-party workers had also taken part, had opposed a concrete, militant programme to the government's policy, demanding the curbing of inflation and pauperisation, shifting of the burden of Versailles onto the propertied sections of the population, and restriction of the activities of counter-revolutionary forces. When the occupation of the Ruhr began, the KPD issued a slogan "Beat Poincaré on the Ruhr and Cuno on the Spree", and called for the creation of a workers' government, arming of the workers and disarming of reactionary organisations, and control over production by factory committees.

The Social-Democratic leaders, disrupting unity of action, again adopted the role of preachers of "class peace" and "national unity". But the "front of national unity" that the Cuno Government called for was unstable from the very beginning. Class contradictions were manifested not only in the Ruhr, but also in Silesia, where 40,000

¹ *Soviet Foreign Policy Documents*, Vol. 6, Moscow, 1962, pp. 150-52 (in Russian).

miners stopped work, and in the Saar, where 70,000 miners went on strike. Proletarian self-defence squads were formed. The workers' control commissions of the factory committees, of which there were around 800, exposed the reactionaries' schemes and kept a watch on the provision of food for the workers.¹ The committees of unemployed became more active. When the occupation troops fired on a workers' march at the Krupps Works in Essen (killing 13 and wounding more than 30 workers), stormy demonstrations of protest swept Germany.

The workers in Paris and other French cities also held demonstrations with slogans like "Down with the Occupation of the Ruhr!", "Long Live Peace with German Workers". Repression was increased. Gaston Monmousseau, Pierre Sémard, and Gabriel Peri were arrested, and Marcel Cachin was deprived of his parliamentary immunity. The Communists and the CGTU set up local action committees which united anti-war actions with the struggle for the workers' day-to-day needs, and stepped up work in the army, encouraging fraternisation of French soldiers and German workers. The May Day demonstrations in Paris led to clashes with the police. The leadership of the SFIO condemned the occupation of the Ruhr but, rejecting mass struggle together with Communists, limited itself to criticism of Poincaré's policy from a bourgeois pacifist standpoint, instead of exposing its imperialist character.

The Executive Committee of the Comintern and the Executive Bureau of the Profintern called, in an open letter to the Second, Vienna, and Amsterdam Internationals, for the organising of joint international workers' actions against the war danger caused by the occupation of the Ruhr. They proposed holding a conference of representatives of all the Internationals in Berlin in order to discuss, at the same time, measures to fight fascism and support the Italian proletariat, and to hold a mass strike on 31 January 1923 against fascism and war.²

The Joint Action Committee against War and Militarism set up by Social-Democrats at a conference in The Hague came to the conclusion, however, that "effective action on the part of the workers against the occupation was extremely difficult, partly on account of the prevailing disunion and partly on account of nationalist propaganda". The idea of a general strike was abandoned. "Instead, the I.F.T.U. resolved to co-operate with the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals to induce the governments to accept the mediation of the League of Nations". The Secretary of the IFTU, Edo Fimmen, in-

¹ *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaft, Politik und Arbeiterbewegung 1923-24*, Berlin, 1924, p. 589.

² *International Press Correspondence*, 1923, No. 12 (Special issue).

formed the Comintern and the Profintern that joint actions were impossible because "mutual confidence was lacking". At the same time disagreements arose in the leadership of the Amsterdam International itself. While Jan Oudegeest declared that a general strike would also not be held because "public opinion would not support a general strike against the Ruhr occupation", considering Germany to be at fault, Fimmen recognised with regret in an article captioned "Black January" that an opportunity to act against imperialism and militarism had been missed because of national disagreements.¹

On March 1, French and German Communists issued an appeal to the workers of all lands. "Once again," it said, "the working class of Europe is faced with the danger of war... Fascist bands are organising civil war against the working class. We direct this appeal to the workers of town and country to set up an international class front of the proletariat... Down with the imperialist robber policy! Long live international solidarity of the exploited!"²

On March 17-20, 1923 an international conference of Communist parties, revolutionary labour unions, and factory committees of Germany, France, Bulgaria, Britain, India, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, the USSR, and other countries, was held in Frankfurt-am-Main on the initiative of the Rhine-Westphalia factory committees. Although the reformist Internationals and parties refused to take part, a number of local organisations and branches of the SPD and USPD sent delegates. The Comintern was represented by W. Kolaroff and the Profintern by S. A. Lozovsky. The conference called on the masses to fight in a united front against conversion of the economic war in the Ruhr into a new imperialist war. The conference adopted a manifesto which said: "The war danger is being increased by the rise of war-mongering fascism. Fascism sets itself the aim of smashing labour organisations and making the workers spineless slaves of capital."³ Those taking part in the conference highly appreciated the solidarity being displayed by the Communist Parties of Germany and France. The International Action Committee against War and Fascism set up by the conference was headed by Clara Zetkin, Fritz Heckert, and Henri Barbusse. The transport, miners, and engineering unions set up their own international committees.

The Action Committee's measures got a response from the workers

¹ This article of Fimmen's aroused resentment against him among the leadership of the IFTU, and he resigned shortly afterward from its Secretariat. Cited from L. Lorwin, *Labor and Internationalism*, New York, 1927, pp. 244, 246-47.

² *Die Rote Fahne*, March 1, 1923.

³ *Die Rote Fahne*, March 22, 1923.

of Germany and other countries. A world fortnight of propaganda against the danger of war and fascism was held from April 15 to May 1; meetings were held in Germany, France, Britain, and Czechoslovakia, which called for the rallying of all working people.

May brought a further aggravation of the situation in Germany. Hunger and anti-war marches were held in several cities. A strike wave again rose. The strike of 380,000 miners, and metal workers in the Ruhr, called by Communists and syndicalists, was particularly significant. The economic struggle grew into a political one. In several towns things went as far as street fighting. And while militarist and fascist groups increased terror, the Prussian Minister of the Interior, the Social-Democrat Carl Severing, banned the proletarian self-defence squads. Local authorities repeatedly appealed to the French occupation authorities for help, thereby confirming that the class solidarity of capital is greater than national rivalry.¹

In the summer inflation attained an unheard of scale, and continued to rise. The monstrous growth of prices, disorganisation of trade and production, profiteering, and unemployment drove the workers, employees, and urban middle strata to their complete wit's end. Anger with the Cuno Government gripped very broad strata of the people. Reactionary nationalist, militarist, and terrorist organisations, among which Hitler's Nazi Party moved to the fore, strove to exploit these moods.

At the end of January the first All-German Congress of the German National Socialist Labour Party (NSDAP) was held in Munich. Around 5,000 persons took part in the parade of storm troopers, who marched with bands and standards. Adolf Hitler hysterically called for a fight against "the betrayers of Germany", having in mind not only "Marxists" (as he called Social-Democrats and Communists) but also the republican government. On the eve of May Day the fascists had planned an armed attack on the workers' demonstration in Munich, but the concerted march of the workers, and the military's fear that mass shooting of workers would cause an explosion of indignation, led to collapse of the fascist adventure. Nevertheless the Nazis continued such actions. In the summer their contacts with the Reichswehr and influential military, nationalist leagues were further strengthened, with the aid of Hermann Göring, the former air ace, who was in command of the storm troopers. It was then that the big industrial magnate Fritz Thyssen began to finance the Nazi Party. In the conditions of the French occupation and the further deterioration of the economic situation the fascists' chauvinistic propaganda and social demagoguery began to get a big response, especially

¹ Günter Hortschansky, *Der nationale Verrat der deutschen Monopolherren während des Ruhrkampfes 1923*, Berlin, 1961, pp. 190, 199-206.

among ex-servicemen and the petty bourgeoisie. By attacking workers they provoked bloody clashes.¹

In reply to the great activity of the forces of reaction, an anti-fascist day was held in Germany on July 29 on the initiative of the Communists. In spite of the banning of demonstrations in Prussia and other parts of Germany, and of the resistance of Social-Democratic and trade union leaders, hundreds of thousands of workers took part in meetings and marches, among them Social-Democratic and non-party workers. On the eve the Central Committee of the KPD addressed a special appeal to the working middle classes and peasants of Germany, calling them to joint action with the workers against the magnates of the Coal Syndicate and the Steel Trust, the Junkers, and fascists. Particularly big demonstrations were held in Central Germany, mainly in Saxony and Thuringia. "Smite the swastika and down with Cuno"—such was the cry of the masses in the anti-fascist demonstrations", a labour newspaper wrote.² A strike wave gripped the Ruhr, the Rhineland, Berlin, Hamburg, Lubeck, Central Germany, and Silesia.³

On August 10, 1923 the Communist group in the Reichstag moved a vote of no confidence in the Cuno Cabinet. The next day the Berlin Committee of revolutionary factory committees called a three-day strike at the thousands-strong meeting; almost all enterprises in Berlin took part. On August 12, the Central Committee of the KPD and the All-German Committee of revolutionary factory committees called on the whole country to unite in a general strike. The call found a wide response; more than three million workers stopped work during the day. The situation resembled that which had obtained three years earlier in the days when the Kapp Putsch was defeated.

The Cuno Government was forced to resign, but influential bourgeois circles, acting together with right-wing leaders of Social-Democracy, were able to block the formation of a workers' or workers' and peasants' government. A "broad coalition" government was formed, headed by the wily bourgeois politician Gustav Stresemann, a friend of Stinnes.⁴ He turned down the advice of the extreme right to proclaim an open military dictatorship, and decided to exercise

¹ For further details see L.I. Gintsberg, *The Labour and Communist Movement of Germany in the Fight against Fascism (1919-1923)*, Moscow, 1978, pp. 78-98; *History of Fascism in Western Europe*, Moscow, 1978, pp. 153-61 (both in Russian).

² *Tribune*, July 29, 1923; cited from Wilhelm Ersil, *Aktionseinheit stürzt Cuno. Zur Geschichte des Massenkampfes gegen die Cuno-Regierung 1923 in Mitteldeutschland*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1963, p. 174; see also L.I. Gintsberg, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

³ For further details see M.I. Orlova, *The Revolutionary Crisis of 1923 in Germany and the Policy of the Communist Party*, Moscow, 1973 (in Russian).

⁴ W. Ruge, *Stresemann. Ein Lebensbild*, Berlin, 1965.

"strong authority" by constitutional means, employing the help of the right-wing Social-Democrats who had joined his Cabinet. By taking the road of capitulation to French imperialism, and calling off "passive resistance", he concentrated all efforts on suppressing the mass movement of the German workers. The All-German Committee of Factory Committees was declared dissolved; later Severing also banned the Berlin Committee.

The strike wave again rose in mid-September. Hunger demonstrations in Berlin and other cities clashed with the police. And while the workers' self-defence squads marched in Dresden and Leipzig, a 75,000-strong armed parade of fascist and other reactionary nationalist organisations was held in Nuremberg. The bourgeois separatist circles became more active in the Rhineland and Bavaria, but the workers broke up their gatherings; and in Küstrin there was a putsch by the illegal "Black Reichswehr". On September 26, President Friedrich Ebert declared a state of emergency throughout the country. The operation of democratic freedoms and guarantees was suspended, and executive authority was given to General von Sekt, the officer commanding the Reichswehr. The government was not so much getting ready to put down right-wing putschists by arms, as to crush the revolutionary workers.

The KPD saw that the working people's anger at the ruling circles' policy was mounting, that a revolutionary crisis was developing in the country, and that serious battles were imminent.¹ It considered the involvement of broad masses of the workers in the general strike that overthrew the Cuno Government to be evidence of their readiness to rise at its call in a struggle for power. The Central Committee set up a Military Council, which was charged with leading the formation and arming of proletarian squads, and the drawing up of plans for an armed uprising.

At a meeting of representatives of the Communist Parties of France, Czechoslovakia, and Germany, and the RCP(B) in Moscow at the end of September, convened by the ECCI to discuss the situation in Germany, Brandler painted a glowing picture of the KPD's readiness for armed actions, claiming that there would be no serious resistance to seizure of power by the German proletariat. Eberlein, it is true, warned against exaggeration, and Thälmann considered Brandler's estimate of the situation unrealistic as it did not take the situation throughout the country into consideration, where the proletarian squads were not ready for armed action and did not always have weapons. But Zinoviev listened more to the opinion of the "ultra-lefts", who demanded that the aim of direct struggle for the dicta-

¹ *Geschichte der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands, Abriss*, Berlin, 1978, p. 47.

torship of the proletariat and Soviet power be set, not being satisfied with the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government, and in fact rejecting the tactics of the united front. As a result the revolutionary maturity of the situation was exaggerated and the forces of the enemy underestimated. Nor was the fact that the majority of the working class remained under the influence of the leaders of Social-Democracy and reformist trade unions taken fully into account. The conclusion of the meeting, that a decisive struggle for proletarian power would be beginning in Germany in the immediate future also found reflection in the theses on the coming German revolution and the tasks of the RCP(B), drafted mainly by Zinoviev and adopted on September 23 by a plenary session of the Central Committee of the RCP(B).¹

Meanwhile the road to Communists' gaining a leading role in the struggle of the working class had then only passed through development of the tactic of the united proletarian front and agitation for the forming of a workers' government. On October 1, 1923 the ECCI and the representatives of the KPD decided it was expedient for the Communists to enter workers' governments in Saxony and Thuringia. The Left Social-Democrats heading them had several times proposed negotiations on the issue.

A workers' government was formed in Saxony on October 10, 1923, headed by Erich Zeigner, and consisting of five Left Social-Democrats and two Communists (Fritz Heckert and Paul Böttcher). Six days later a similar government was formed in Thuringia.² But they were unable to cope with the tasks facing them. While the Social-Democratic ministers dodged carrying out resolute measures, the Communists did not manage to insist on taking even the main steps, viz., arming of the workers, purging of the government machinery, easing of the distress of the working people. That was why workers, the unemployed, peasants, and members of the urban middle classes could not be mobilised for vigorous action.

At the end of October 1923 the socio-political situation in the country became even more tense. While the Stresemann Government was planning military crushing of the workers of Saxony and Thuringia, and while the KPD intensified preparation for an all-German armed insurrection, a session of its Central Committee in Dresden on October 20 decided to call a nationwide general strike that would grow into an armed uprising with the aim of overthrowing the Stresemann Government and forming a workers' and peasants' government. The military plan envisaged that the uprising would be be-

¹ *The Communist International. A Short History*, Moscow, 1969, pp. 207-10 (in Russian).

² M.I. Orlova, *op. cit.*, pp. 332-33.

gun by the workers of Hamburg on the night of October 22, and this would disorientate the Reichswehr which was poised against Saxony and Thuringia where more than a third of the proletarian squads were concentrated and where it was proposed to launch the main attack. This area of armed insurrection would form a revolutionary barrier between fascism in the south (in Bavaria) and the counter-revolution in the north (in Prussia). The call for a general strike was to be issued by a conference of revolutionary factory committees, control commissions, and other proletarian organisations of Saxony in Chemnitz, to which representatives of Bavaria, Brunswick, and other states had been invited.¹

On the day the conference opened, October 21, it became known that units of the Reichswehr were already moving into Saxony. The proletarian squads of Chemnitz and other centres were alerted. A meeting of the Communist faction of the Chemnitz conference was informed of the Central Committee's decision of the night before to begin an armed insurrection. Messengers were sent out to the localities. When Brandler, at the end of the day, proposed in the name of the KPD the calling of an immediate general strike to the conference, the move was quite unexpected by the Social-Democrat and non-party delegates. Since the matter had not been agreed earlier, even with the Left Social-Democrats, it was referred to a commission. Then Brandler and Thalheimer themselves took a decision to postpone the strike and armed insurrection. A second messenger was sent to Hamburg, but he only arrived after the uprising had already begun there.

The Hamburg Communists, under the leadership of Ernst Thälmann, had thoroughly prepared for the forthcoming battles. On October 21 a conference of shipbuilding workers, at which all proletarian parties and organisations were represented, resolved to begin a general strike along the whole North German coast. In the evening the Hamburg organisation of the KPD approved the plan of the armed uprising which envisaged sudden attacks of groups of workers on police stations, the disarming of the police, and a concentric march of squads to the centre of the city to take possession of the main strategic objectives.²

The uprising, begun at dawn on October 23, led within a few hours to the taking of 17 out of the 50 police stations, and the seizing

¹ For further details see Walter Ulbricht *et al.*, *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 3, Berlin, 1966, pp. 408-37; H. Habedank, *Zur Geschichte des Hamburger Aufstandes 1923*, Berlin, 1958; D.S. Davidovich, *The Revolutionary Crisis of 1923 in Germany and the Hamburg Uprising*, Moscow, 1963, pp. 134-36, 156 (in Russian).

² *Essays on the History of Armed Uprisings*, Vol. 2, Issue I, Moscow-Leningrad, 1931, pp. 78-80 (in Russian).

of 170 rifles and ammunition. But the successful actions of separate groups did not grow into an overall plan-based attack. The storming of the police barracks in Wandsbek and the move to the centre did not take place. In the proletarian neighbourhoods of north Hamburg the workers raised barricades, but the many-thousand-strong proletarian masses, while expressing solidarity with the insurgents and coming out on the streets, were almost not involved in the seizing of weapons and fighting actions, in which only 300 bold armed fighters took part. The organisational weakness of the Communists, and the absence of a firm united front had their effect. The insurgents' forces were concentrated in the working-class area of Barmbeck, where Thälmann's HQ was located. Flexible manoeuvring tactics of guerrilla struggle were employed there in bitter clashes with the attacking police. An acute lack of weapons was felt all the time, while the police not only had numerical superiority but also machine-guns, armoured cars, lorries, and spotter aircraft at their disposal.

The delayed message from Chemnitz on postponement of the uprising disoriented both the fighting workers and those who were ready to join the fight. As a result fighting continued in only three areas of the city on the second day. The police, who numbered 5,000 and had received reinforcements from warships, were unable, however, to break the resistance of the insurgent groups. Only on the evening of October 25, when it had become clear that the Hamburg action was an isolated one, did the insurrection's leaders give orders for an organised cessation of the struggle.¹

The heroic Hamburg insurrection was not able to develop into a mass struggle of the proletariat for power and ended in failure. Nevertheless, as Ernst Thälmann wrote later, "it was a thousand times more fruitful and valuable for the future of the class struggle than a retreat without striking a blow.

"[The sacrifices] were made not only for creating a Party of Bolsheviks in Germany, but also for the future of the whole working class."²

After suppression of the Hamburg uprising the Stresemann Government demanded the resignation of the Zeigner Government in Saxony, where units of the Reichswehr were already carrying out reprisals. When it refused to resign, it was replaced by force. The workers' government in Thuringia also fell. Reactionary forces raised their heads. The Bavarian dictator Gustav Kahr in Munich wanted to turn Bavaria into a bastion of reaction, even at the price of separating it

¹ *Essays on the History of Armed Uprisings*, Vol. 2, Issue 1, pp. 89-97; D.S. Davidovich, *op. cit.*, pp. 220-65; W. Ruge, *Deutschland von 1917 bis 1933*, Berlin, 1974, pp. 233-34; Ernst Thälmann, *Eine Biographie*, Berlin, 1979, pp. 172-86.

² Ernst Thälmann, *Reden und Aufsätze zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, Vol. 1, Berlin, 1955, pp. 261, 263.

from the rest of Germany. Hitler, dreaming of the role of a German Mussolini, proclaimed the beginning of "the National revolution" and a "march on Berlin" to overthrow the republican government on November 8 in the Bürgerbräukeller (where the Bavarian elite were gathered and into which armed storm troopers had burst). But Kahr and the generals, who had initially supported the putsch, on seeing its lack of prospects, abandoned the Nazis. Their armed demonstration of November 9, which led to bloody clashes, was broken up by the police. Hitler and General Ludendorff were arrested, and the Nazi Party banned. The Communist Party was also banned.

The collapse of the "beer hall putsch" showed that the fascist movement had still not become an imposing force, while the Nazis' anti-capitalist demagoguery frightened many bourgeois. The authorities then existing in Germany relied completely on the traditional means of fighting the revolutionary movement, i.e. on the Reichswehr and the co-operation of right-wing Social-Democratic leaders (although they were not in the government). Hitler, incidentally, was not held for long in the fortress, and individual capitalist magnates had followed Thyssen and were already financing his party, seeing it as an important reserve that could come in useful in the future.¹

The failure of the revolutionary battles of the autumn of 1923 seriously exacerbated relations between Communists and Social-Democrats. While quite influential centrist and left-wing circles had from time to time joined in concerted actions with Communists before these battles, under pressure of the proletarian masses, anti-communist sentiments now became uppermost in Social-Democracy. In the KPD, which had been forced into illegality, "ultralefts" who rejected any agreement with Social-Democrats and the united front policy had become the leadership. Furthermore they declared the Social-Democratic Party to be a "faction of fascism" and posed the task of eliminating it politically. The Communist Party had not yet achieved ideological and political maturity; it had still to master experience of Leninism in order to become a real party of the new type.²

THE ANTI-FASCIST UPRISING IN BULGARIA

In Bulgaria the government was headed, after May 1920, by Alexander Stambolisky, the leader of the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union, who put forward a theory of estates and tried to implement the idea of independent peasant power. Since the peasant estate con-

¹ L.I. Gintsberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 148-66; *History of Fascism in Western Europe*, pp. 158-61.

² Walter Ulbricht *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 436-37.

stituted 80 per cent of the population, he considered that it itself should rule the country and that the desperate position of the peasantry could be improved by developing co-operation. The government carried out a number of democratic reforms that substantially affected the interests of the big financial and commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, although they did not touch the foundations of the capitalist system. Such were the laws on labour conscription, and especially on a progressive income tax, passed in the summer of 1920, and the law of 1921 on landed property which fixed the maximum holding at 30 hectares. At the same time the Agrarian Union's estate ideology, which opposed the theory of class struggle, was hostile to the workers' revolutionary struggle, while the Party's right-wing circles pushed it towards collaboration with the bourgeois parties.

Important socio-economic shifts were taking place then in Bulgaria. The proletariat was turning into an important social force. The growth in the absolute and relative numbers and concentration of industrial workers (primarily tobacco workers and miners, whose numbers had risen in 1920 by 150 per cent compared with 1910), together with the rise in their literacy and culture, provided favourable objective conditions for further development of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat.¹

Trade union organisation of the workers increased almost exclusively through revolutionary unions. The centrist trend in the trade union movement almost completely disappeared; at the end of 1920 its supporters, together with the left of the Social-Democratic Party and the unions close to it, became members of the Bulgarian Communist Party and the revolutionary trade union organisation.² Reformist unions retained their influence only among the railwaymen, craftsmen, and petty employees. The BCP and the revolutionary unions set up many party and trade union schools in which advanced workers studied Marxist theory and the practical experience of class struggle gathered in the postwar years. The strike struggle of the workers revived; they defended the eight-hour day and protested against lockouts and wage cuts.

The economic crisis, which hit Bulgaria in 1921 intensified class contradictions. The bourgeoisie, who had launched an offensive against the workers, was supported in several cases by the Agrarian Union's Government. But in 1922, when reaction, trying in their own interests to exploit the remnants of Wrangel's Russian troops who were in Bulgaria, began to threaten Stambolisky's Government,

¹ M.A. Birman, *Formation and Development of the Bulgarian Proletariat*, Moscow, 1980, pp. 258-60 (in Russian).

² Y. Yotov, *Centrism in the Bulgarian Socialist Movement*, Sofia, 1969, pp. 372-418; *History of the Trade Union Movement in Bulgaria*, Sofia, 1973, pp. 266-69 (both in Bulgarian).

de facto co-operation was established between the Agrarian Union and the BCP.

In those years the BCP gradually overcame its traditional ignoring of the peasantry as a possible ally of the proletariat in the struggle against the reactionary bourgeoisie. In 1920 it began publishing a newspaper *Selski vestnik* (Country Herald) specially for peasants and agricultural labourers. In February 1921 Lenin advised Georgi Dimitrov, who was visiting him: "Beware of enthusiasms, act soberly, prepare tirelessly to ensure victory of the revolution in your country." He recommended the Bulgarian Communists to concern themselves seriously with organising the working class itself, creating an alliance of workers and peasants, and carrying on work among the soldiers.¹ The Third Congress of the BCP, held in May 1921, acting in accordance with the decisions of the Second Congress of the Comintern, passed a special resolution moved by Dimitar Blagoev on the agrarian and peasant question. This resolution, which substantiated the policy of drawing the working peasantry into the revolutionary movement, marked an advance in the Party's ideological development.² With more than 37,000 members, the Party had built its organisations and groups in most cities and in many villages. During the local elections it had repeatedly had success not only in the municipal authorities of industrial centres but also in many rural areas.

The Fourth Congress of the BCP, in the summer of 1922, taking the resolutions of the Third Congress of the Comintern and the plenum of the ECCI as its starting point, adopted the united front tactic, although the Party considered only technical, partial, and not political agreements with the Agrarian Union admissible.³ The biggest success in joint actions of the two parties was the national referendum in November 1922, when more than two-thirds of the electorate supported the proposal to try those responsible for the military catastrophes of 1913 and 1918.⁴ But the co-operation of the parties was short-lived; the Agrarian Union's government increased its attacks on Communists, under pressure from the right. During the parliamentary elections in April 1923 a bitter struggle developed between the parties. Because of the changes made in the election law by Stambolisky, the Communist Party got only 16 seats (against 47) although it received more than 203,000 votes (against 120,000 in

¹ *Reminiscences of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin*, Vol. 5, p. 316.

² *V.I. Lenin and the Formation of the Communist Parties in Countries of Central and Southeastern Europe*, Moscow, 1973, p. 350 (in Russian).

³ *Lenin and Historical Destiny of Bulgarian People*, Sofia-Moscow, 1970, pp. 123-125 (in Bulgarian and Russian).

⁴ D. Tishev, *United Action between Communists and Agrarians in the Fight against Fascism*, Sofia, 1967, pp. 74-80 (in Bulgarian).

1919). The right-wing elements in the Agrarian Union began to act more and more in an anti-communist spirit, while sectarian dogmatic moods became stronger in the BCP. The view spread that the struggle between the bourgeois parties and organisations on the one hand, and the Agrarian Union on the other, was no more than an internecine struggle between the urban and rural bourgeoisie, in which the workers should not intervene. Those sentiments played a pernicious role during the dramatic events that soon occurred in the country.

During the night of July 9, 1923 military and fascist circles, which had formed a secret fascist organisation, National Concord, linked with the officers' Military League, carried out a coup d'état in Sofia while Stambolisky was away. The conspirators, relying on military units commanded by officers from the League, took possession of government institutions and arrested most of the ministers. The tsar named A. Tsankov, one of the leaders of the National Concord, head of a new government.

In many areas, however, the fascist conspirators met stiff resistance, primarily in the Pazardzhik area (where Stambolisky was at the time), Shumen, Orkhaniysk, and other areas where Agrarian Union leaders who had often acted together with Communists roused the peasants to fight. In some areas (Karlovo and Oryakhovo) and towns (Pleven, Gabrovo, and Kayali) the local organisations of the BCP, which co-operated with "friends" in the Agrarian Union, led actions of the workers and peasants. In the armed struggle against regular units commanded by fascist officers between June 9 and 14, tens of thousands of poorly armed peasants and workers took part, led by members of the BCP and Agrarian Union. Some of the insurgents acted under the slogan of establishing workers' and peasants' power. The actions were badly organised, however, and the leadership of the BCP called on the workers and Communists to be neutral. The insurrections were crushed. Stambolisky, who tried to restore co-operation with the Pazardzhik Communists at a critical moment, was killed.¹ Tsankov's dictatorship wiped out the working people's gains of many years, abolished the democratic reforms, and started a bitter persecution of democrats and Communists.

The neutral position of the Central Committee of the BCP caused bewilderment in many local party organisations. Quite a number of Communists in the Sofia, Pazardzhik, Pleven, and other organisations, the Vidin regional committee of the BCP, and some of the Burgas

¹ Y. Mitev, *The Fascist Coup of June 9, 1923 and the June Anti-Fascist Uprising*, Sofia, 1973, pp. 214-352 (in Bulgarian). G.A. Cherneiko, *The BAPU—True Helper of Bulgarian Communists. On the 80th Anniversary of the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union*, Moscow, 1979 (in Russian).

regional committee, and others condemned its stand.¹ The BCP leadership was also criticised by the Executive Committee of the Comintern as well. At the latter's plenary meeting in June 1923 the events in Bulgaria had been evaluated as a major defeat of the Communist Party, which was all the more serious in that it was a mass party with long revolutionary traditions, a party followed by a majority of the working class, and for which around a fifth of the electorate had voted in the elections. Such a party should not have stood aside from the battle with fascism. In its letter the ECCI said that the theory of neutrality could do unheard-of damage on the international plane to all the parties of the Comintern. The BCP was advised to recognise its mistake openly, prepare to go underground, and to mount a counter-offensive in alliance with surviving leaders of the Agrarian Union.²

The representative of the BCP on the ECCI, Wassil Kolaroff, soon returned to Bulgaria. He succeeded, not without difficulty, in overcoming the resistance of some of the Party leadership. Only after long, outspoken discussions and thorough analysis of the situation was a breakthrough achieved. At the beginning of August the Communist Party decided to prepare and carry out an armed, anti-fascist insurrection. The Central Committee appealed to the Agrarian Union, Social-Democrats, and certain other organisations and groupings to build a united front of struggle against the offensive of capital and fascism, in defence of the vital interests of the working people, and for a workers' and peasants' government.

The platform of united action was oriented on overthrowing the most reactionary group of the bourgeoisie that had seized power, rather than on immediate abolition of capitalism. It envisaged easing of the tax burden, allotting of land to landless peasants and smallholders, restoration and extension of political rights and freedoms, and disbandment of fascist organisations.³ The Communists strove to draw the reformist trade unions and the Union of Artisans and also co-operators and anarcho-communists, into the struggle. The spokesman of the idea of a united front of all the working people in the fight against fascism was Georgi Dimitrov, member of the Central Committee of the BCP and leader of the ARTU. In August, and at the beginning of September 1923, he published a series of articles in which he consistently developed the idea that "fascism is far from

¹ *The Bulgarian Communist Party in Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences, and Plenums of the CC*, Vol. 2, Sofia, 1951, p. 349; D. Kosev, *The September Uprising of 1923*, Sofia, 1973, pp. 136-41 (both in Bulgarian).

² *The Enlarged Plenum of the Comintern Executive (June 12-23, 1923). Report*, Moscow, 1923, pp. 254-62, 300-03 (in Russian). (Further on *The Enlarged ECCI Plenum*).

³ S. Petrov, *The September Insurrection of 1923 and the Bolshevisation of the BCP*, Sofia, 1966, pp. 97-101 (in Bulgarian).

being only *anti-communist*, it is at the same time *anti-popular* in essence".¹

The Social-Democratic leaders, however, and those of most of the other organisations, rejected the proposal for joint actions. The idea of a united front got a favourable reception only from the left wing of the Agrarian Union, but there were also forces in the League whose opposition had to be overcome. All the same, a group of supporters of a united front and joint struggle with the BCP and workers against fascism emerged in the ranks of the Union, under the impact of the tragic events of 9 June 1923. This group of "united-fronters" tried to overcome the confusions associated with the ideas of the theory of social estates and independent peasant power. The BCP gave great assistance to this trend in the Union.² The Communists developed military and technical preparations for an insurrection, with the participation of "united-fronters".

Meantime Tsankov's Government, having got wind of the insurrection being prepared, decided to forestall it. On September 12 it carried out arrests of Communists all over the country. Although the Party succeeded in getting some of its leading forces out of danger, nevertheless the arrest of 2,500 activists and the smashing up of clubs and printshops, immediately deprived it of all legal opportunities. In some places the authorities' actions were resisted, but the attempts of Party and trade union committees to organise a general protest strike on September 14 had no success. In Sofia only a partial strike was held, during which there were bloody clashes with the police.

On September 17 and 20, the Central Committee of the BCP, assuming that a revolutionary situation existed in the country, decided by a majority for an armed insurrection, which was to begin on the night of 22 September 1923. Its aim, the resolution said, was overthrow of the fascist government and "*the formation of a workers' and peasants' government. The Communist Party will act together with the Agrarian Union.*" Wassil Kolaroff, Georgi Dimitrov, and G. Genov were elected to the Main Military Revolutionary Committee, which was instructed to draw in representatives of the Agrarian Union.³

In those days the revolutionary committees set up to prepare the insurrection, fearing its failure or delay, and not being able to prevent premature actions, called on their organisations to rise in va-

¹ Georgi Dimitrov, *For a United and Popular Front*, Sofia Press, Sofia, 1972, p. 12. These articles essentially had the kernel of the idea of a broad anti-fascist front of all the democratic forces that Dimitrov formulated and elaborated more thoroughly later.

² *The September Anti-Fascist Uprising of 1923. Documents and Materials*, Vol. 1, Sofia, 1973, pp. 31-36, 47-50, 117-18 (in Bulgarian).

³ D. Kosev, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-63.

rious points of the country. In several areas of Southern Bulgaria, for instance, the insurrection had already begun on September 19. In some areas of the Stara Zagora district the smallholders and the not very numerous but militant proletariat created a united front of Communists and Agrarian Union members, and began offensive actions. On September 20 Nova Zagora was occupied by the insurgents, but the working people of other towns, where there were strong garrisons, did not rise, which enabled the authorities to manoeuvre troops. By September 23 the Government succeeded in crushing the main forces of the insurgents of this area in bitter battles.

In Plovdiv, a major workers' centre with a strong Party organisation, the authorities carried out mass arrests on September 21, having mobilised all military units and reserves, and broke the action being planned. In Panagyurishte, Pazardzhik, and Peshtera districts the insurgents succeeded in seizing the town of Bratsigovo and several dozen villages, and fought several heroic battles. But since Plovdiv did not rise, they were soon forced to scatter and take to the mountains. In the Pirin territory in the south-west, the insurgents and revolutionary soldiers seized the town of Razlog, but could not hold it.

The plan for the uprising in Sofia had been carefully worked out. It provided for mutual action with the Vratsa district. Nevertheless the Government also forestalled events. On September 21 a purge of the troops was carried out, and the military revolutionary committee was smashed. The leaders who escaped gave instructions to postpone action, which disorganised the actions of the insurgents in neighbouring areas.

In several district centres no actions could be organised because of the preventive arrests and the bewilderment of the leaders who remained free. But in almost all districts considerable foci arose, and sometimes whole areas of insurrection. The numerous squads of poorly armed workers and peasants—Communists, YCLers, and members of the Agrarian Union ("united-fronters" and their sympathisers)—battled heroically against the superior forces of regular army units. Liaison between the insurrectionists, however, was poor. The fascist command, transferring reinforcements by rail, and exploiting their numerical and military superiority, defeated the selflessly fighting insurgents. Their heroism could not make up for lack of arms, leadership, and organisation, and lack of experience of armed struggle.

The biggest rising was in North-Western Bulgaria (the Vratsa district), which was directly led by the Main Military Revolutionary Committee. Revolutionary power was established jointly with the Agrarian Union in eight towns and 400 villages. The insurgents fought several successful battles, but the fight was already losing mo-

mentum in the other districts. The Government concentrated its main forces against the insurgents, broke them up, and forced them to retreat and scatter. A considerable number emigrated to Yugoslavia. By the end of September the fight had ceased everywhere.

A brutal repression began. Dimitrov wrote later: "Five thousand Communists, Agrarians, and other valiant sons of the people were brutally murdered. Fifteen thousand workers and peasants, teachers and priests, and other servants of the people from the intelligentsia were arrested and subjected to inhuman torture... Indescribable outrages and acts of cruelty, which the Bulgarian people had not suffered on such a scale even in the five centuries of Turkish slavery—such in brief was the horrible, shameful result of the barbarous hate of the ferocious banker-profitier and military-monarchist ruling clique in Bulgaria!"¹

In spite of the defeat, the September anti-fascist popular uprising has its place not only in the history of Bulgaria but also of the whole international labour movement as a memorable example of courageous struggle against fascism. While Dimitrov pointed out the shortcomings and miscalculations connected with the fact that it had not been thoroughly prepared in military and other terms and the fact that the Communists did not overcome the mistaken tactics of June 9, and were unable to build a firm alliance of workers and labouring peasants and to win over the soldiers, he emphasised ten years after the September uprising that its great experience was an important link in the liberation struggle of the Bulgarian workers and peasants.² It was the first attempt to carry out in practice the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government. The uprising marked a major turning point in the development of the BCP, and left its stamp on the whole social, political, and cultural life of Bulgaria.³

THE STRIKE STRUGGLE IN POLAND

Poland's return to peacetime life took place in a situation of even greater economic difficulties than when the Polish state was restored in 1918. The Polish-Soviet war of 1920 prevented forming of a single economic organism out of the Polish lands previously divided by frontiers and linked with different markets, and made the disorganisation worse. Many enterprises shut down, or were working at less

¹ G. Dimitrov, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Sofia, 1967, pp. 252-53 (translated from the Russian).

² *Georgi Dimitrov at the Fascist Trial. Letters and Documents*, Sofia, 1945, pp. 67-88 (in Bulgarian).

³ *History of the Bulgarian Communist Party*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 283-88 (in Russian).

than capacity. In industry and coal mining, only 23 per cent of the prewar number of workers were employed, according to the 1921 census, and 49 per cent in agriculture.¹ Unemployment was declining very slowly. Not only was the position of the unemployed hard, but also that of the workers; real wages had fallen substantially. Inflation increased, particularly in 1923; the exchange rate of the Polish mark fell to a third in September, compared with June, and to under 3 per cent in November.²

The social gains won by the workers in the preceding years, and the bourgeois-democratic constitution adopted in March 1921, though they were progressive, did not solve many acute problems. Furthermore, the ruling circles took a line of liquidating democratic freedoms and reducing social rights. Trying to stabilise the economy at the expense of the working people, they attempted to protect themselves from counteractions by direct terror. The Sejm even began drafting a law on the death penalty. Freedom to strike was limited, trade unions and other workers' organisations were subjected to repression, not to mention Communists—the Communist Party (KPRP) was still outlawed under the 1921 Constitution.

The labour movement began to grow rapidly at the beginning of 1921. According to official figures 473,000 took part in strikes in 1921, and 607,000 in 1922.³ These figures do not reflect the qualitative swing, viz., the preponderance of mass strikes (local, industrial, and national general strikes). At first they were predominantly defensive and spontaneous, but the workers did not just put forward economic demands, and stubbornly defended their right to strike. In February 1921 a general strike of railwaymen began. When the government responded by introducing martial law, the Central Commission of Trade Unions called a national solidarity strike. The railwaymen's strike ended in March. Martial law was rescinded, but the strikers' demands were not met, and many were sacked.

In October 1921 Communists and Socialists organised a strike of agricultural workers. Repressive measures were also taken against these strikers, including mass arrests. Nevertheless the workers succeeded in winning a pay rise and recognition of their union.⁴ During the year the police intervened against 66 strikes.⁵ The Communists, as a rule, were working in the underground. Only during such big actions as the strike of Lodz textile workers in July 1921, which was

¹ *100 lat polskiego ruchu robotniczego. Kronika Wydarzeń*, Warsaw, 1978, p. 101.

² *Ibid.*, p. 107.

³ J. Kowalski, *Zarys historii polskiego ruchu robotniczego. 1918-1939*, Part 1, Warsaw, 1962, pp. 187, 225.

⁴ J. Kowalski, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

⁵ A. Tymieniecka, "Walki klasowe w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym". In: *Nie wykorzystane szanse II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warsaw, 1978, p. 166.

accompanied with stormy demonstrations, did they openly join the strike committee. In the autumn the KPRP developed a struggle against the ruling circles' attempts to bring in a law on a state of emergency. Meetings and demonstrations of protest played an important role, but the general strike planned for December 2 did not become widespread. Outstanding in the strikes of 1922 was the mass action of agricultural workers of the Poznań area in August, in which 103,000 proletarians (87 per cent of the total) took part, demanding pay rises because of the increasing inflation. Troops and police were moved against them. More than ten persons were killed and many wounded during the "pacification". Nevertheless the workers' persistence brought them partial success.¹ At the same time the intensification of mass struggle induced the Sejm to pass a bill on general sickness insurance for workers and medical care for their families. Almost all collective contracts began to provide for paid holidays.

The KPRP managed, with great difficulty, to restore its organisations, broken up by the mass repressive measures of the summer and autumn of 1920 (when around 5,000 Communists were imprisoned or interned). In February 1921 its Second Conference, which adopted a policy of guidance of the broad masses, decided to make use of legal forms of work and to take part in parliamentary elections. Hoping, as before, for a "mounting of revolutionary conflict", the Party endeavoured to become "the spokesman of the interests not only of the factory workers but also of the broadest masses of the public who are being thrust to the depths of poverty by the capitalist managing of things."²

In May 1921 the Third Party Council of the KPRP developed the principles of Communists' work in trade unions. Giving first place to the struggle for partial demands, the Party tried to preserve the unity of the class trade unions, the foundation of the legal bridgehead of the labour movement. But the leadership of the Socialist Party strictly forbade its members and organisations to co-operate with Communists. The Central Commission of Trade Unions, which was under the control of the Socialist Party, began to expel left organisations, whole sections of unions, and rank-and-file workers who were Communists. That undermined the workers' solidarity and the effectiveness of their actions. In 1921 the membership of unions led by reformists reached a maximum of 501,000, more than double their numbers since 1919. In the autumn of 1921, however, an ebb set in and membership fell to 387,000 by 1923³. The Communists had to change their tactics and pass to forming "red factions" in the unions,

¹ *100 lat polskiego ruchu robotniczego*, p. 104.

² *KPP. Uchwały i rezolucje*, Vol. 1, Warsaw, 1953, pp. 122-23.

³ *100 lat polskiego ruchu robotniczego*, p. 102. Total union membership was 1,081,000 in 1921, and 1,194,000 in 1923.

which united workers sympathising with the KPRP but not connected with it organisationally. The growth of a Communist influence was seen during the elections for the management bodies of hospital funds. In Warsaw KPRP members got a majority, and in the Dąbrowa Basin 60 per cent.¹ In the elections for the City Council of Poznań the Communist candidates got more votes than the Socialists.

Successful work among the masses and the employment of flexible tactics enhanced the KPRP's standing among the left-wing activists of worker's parties. In 1921 opposition groups of the Socialist Party, grouped around E. Sochacki, Porankiewicz, and S. Lańcucki, joined it. The last-named spoke in the Sejm as the first Communist deputy. In July he and T. Dombal, a deputy of the PPS-Lewica peasant party, who had come over to the KPRP, set up a Communist group in the Sejm. The Communists began to publish the journal *Ski-ba* for the rural population, which explained in popular style their right to the land they tilled, and supported the struggle of the small peasants and landless for land without repayment. A socio-cultural journal *Kultura robotnicza* (Workers' Culture) began to appear. In March 1922 a Young Communist League was founded at a congress in Warsaw, which accepted the political leadership of the KPRP.

A conviction strengthened among the activists of the KPRP that a new revolutionary upswing was maturing in the country. In a letter to Polish Communists in October 1921, warning certain leaders against exaggeration of successes, Lenin drew attention specially to the point that "the Government and the bourgeoisie must be prevented from strangling the revolution by bloody suppression of a premature uprising". Reminding them of the importance of winning the masses to the Party, and of the seats in the Sejm, which "the wave of the workers' revolution and the peasants' discontent" should take over, he advised waiting "for the tide to rise to its highest... the revolution must be allowed to grow to full ripening of the fruit".² The letter helped the KPRP improve its strategy and tactics.

During the election campaign for the Sejm in 1922 the KPRP created a legal organisation—the League of the Proletariat of Town and Country. In spite of persecution, arrests, and cancelling of lists of candidates, the League got 122,000 votes (mainly in Warsaw and the Dąbrowa Basin), and won two seats. The Party, while continuing to work underground, persistently mastered the tactic of the united front, and discussed the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government.³

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 100, 101.

² V.I. Lenin, "A Letter to Polish Communists", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, pp. 354-55.

³ For details see I.S. Yazhborovskaya, *The Communist Party of Poland and the Ideas of the October Revolution*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 231-48 (in Russian).

The revolutionary upsurge reached its peak in 1923. That year 849,000 workers took part in 1,265 strikes in 7,451 enterprises.¹ In early January the Government declared a state of emergency. The police stepped up persecution of Communists and their supporters. The premises of trade unions that were under Communist influence and also those of the Central Committee of the League of the Proletariat of Town and Country, were closed in Warsaw, Lodz, and Bialystok, and left publications were banned. During the year 15,639 persons were arrested for Communist activity.² The police used force to break 77 strikes.³

Meanwhile the ruling circles were trying to bring order into the economy, stabilise the currency, and reduce political tension, but the measures they adopted could not weaken the workers' strike struggle, the peasants' dissatisfaction, or the national emancipation movement in the Western Ukrainian and Western Byelorussian lands. In January an economic strike began of the textile workers of the Lodz, Bialystok, and Bielsk industrial areas that lasted nearly a month. Pay rises were won. Six months later there was another general strike, which was successful in spite of clashes with the police in which there were killed and injured. In July the metal workers of the Kielce province, the Dąbrowa Basin, Warsaw, Lublin, Czechochowa, and Bialystok were on strike for more than two weeks. All the strikes ended in victory for the workers.

The KPRP tried to link this working-class struggle for everyday demands with the struggle for more far-reaching reforms. In July the Communists introduced a bill in the Sejm to transfer confiscated landlords' land to the peasants. In August the Party appealed to the working people and the Socialist and peasant parties to create a united front to form a workers' and peasants' government, but got no response.

In September and October 1923 the Second Congress of the KPRP considered key issues of the Party's strategy and tactics, and amended its programme. After a thorough study of the situation in rural areas and the demands of the peasantry, which it had begun to look upon as an ally of the working class, the Congress demanded in its Agrarian Theses confiscation of landlords' land and its allocation to the peasants. For the first time, too, it treated the national question in a deep, comprehensive way. Recognising the right of nations to self-determination, including the right to secede, the Party paved the way to uniting the emancipation struggle of the Ukrainians and

¹ *100 lat polskiego ruchu robotniczego*, p. 111.

² J. Borkowski, "Nie wykorzystane szanse II Rzeczypospolitej". In *Nie wykorzystane szanse II Rzeczypospolitej*, p. 98.

³ Tymieniecka, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

Byelorussians with the revolutionary movement of the Polish workers and peasants. The Congress stressed that "the revolutionary proletariat of Poland must act on the arena of historical events not only as the spokesman of the interests of its class but also as the leader and defender of the interests of the whole nation".¹ The Congress resolutions demonstrated that the Party had finally adopted a Leninist stand on all main issues.² Tactical principles and slogans had been worked out in detail, allowing for systematic legal and illegal work to win over the masses. Their practical implementation, however, was complicated by the repressive measures of the ruling classes, and the hostile attitude of the leaders of the Socialist and peasant parties, who rejected a united front with the KPRP.

In October and November 1923 the workers' struggle reached its highest pitch. Back in May a conference of factory trade union committees in Upper Silesia had elected a Central Action Committee (the Committee of 21), chaired by a Communist, J. Wieczorek. The Committee was a trade union body meant to lead mass campaigns, but in fact it was an organ of the united front. At its call there was a general strike of the miners, metal workers, and railwaymen in Upper Silesia from 9 to 17 October. In spite of the arrests of most of the Committee's members, and actions against the strikers, the strike was won; so, too, was the miners' strike that developed afterward in the Dabrowa and Cracow coal fields.

The Government responded to the sharpening of the revolutionary situation by intensifying repression. Using the explosion of a powder magazine in the Warsaw Citadel on October 14 as a pretext, it accused the Communist Party of anarchism and terrorism, arrested 2,000 Communists and other left-wingers, banned the left-wing press, and closed down several trade unions. These measures did not, however, stem the strike struggle. On October 22 a general railwaymen's strike began, which was soon joined by the postal and textile workers of Lodz, and the public utilities workers of Warsaw. Demonstrations were held everywhere. On November 1 the Government militarised the railways and set up courts-martial.

The Communist Party called on the working class to unite its forces. An appeal of 30 October 1923 said that the general protest strike called for November 5 should not be just a demonstration but should be continued until the landlords' and capitalists' government was

¹ *II zjazd Komunistycznej Partii Robotniczej Polski (19.IX-2.X.1923). Protokoły obrad i uchwały*, Warsaw, 1968; *KPP. Uchwały i rezolucje*, Vol. 2, Warsaw, 1955, p. 198.

² A.J. Manusevich, "Lenin and the Ideological and Political Development of the KPRP". In *V.I. Lenin and the Formation of Communist Parties in Countries of Central and Southeast Europe*, p. 98 (in Russian).

overthrown. The leaders of the Socialist Party and reformist trade unions were forced, considering the militant mood of the masses, to associate themselves with the KPRP's call. But they postponed the beginning of the miners' and textile workers' strike to November 7, and began secret negotiations with the Government.

The general strike affected many areas of the country, but the authorities decided to hit the workers in Cracow hardest.¹ Police units from near-by towns were moved close to the city, plus the 16th Infantry Regiment, and certain other military units. Machine-guns were posted near the Wawel Castle.

On the morning of November 6th when the striking workers began to gather for a meeting in front of the Workers' Hall (Trade Union House), they came up against police cordons. Two companies from the 16th Regiment soon arrived to aid the police. After two demonstrators had been killed by police bullets, the workers disarmed the police; the soldiers, among whom there were many peasants from the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia, began to fraternise with the workers. The insurgents, having seized weapons, cleared the police from neighbouring streets. The authorities' attempts to send against the strikers a squadron of Uhlans, who began to attack supported by machine-guns and armoured cars, were defeated. The insurgents, avoiding a pitched battle, fired on the troops from rooftops and windows. After breaking the soldiers' ranks, they seized an armoured car, rifles, and machine-guns, occupied the centre of the city, and began to form fighting squads. During this fighting 18 workers were killed and several hundred wounded.

The spontaneously flaring uprising, however, did not have a central command. Many of the Cracow Communists were in gaol, and the Socialist leaders who were in the city, including the Sejm members, immediately began negotiations with the city authorities and the Government in Warsaw. During the day of November 6th, Socialist Party agitators, driving about the streets and proclaiming the workers' victory, were at the same time calling on them to hand in their captured weapons at the Workers' Hall. A hurriedly formed "public order service" organised their confiscation. When the workers gathering at the Hall next morning began demanding weapons, they found there were no longer any there; they had been smuggled out of the city during the night. The right-wing Socialist and trade union leaders to whom the Government had gladly entrusted "pacification of the mob" terminated the general strike. The railwaymen's struggle also ended on November 9, the Government having said it would consider their economic demands.

¹ For further details see F. Kalitskaya, *The Cracow Rising of 1923. A Historical Essay*, Moscow, 1954; *Essays in the History of Armed Uprisings*, pp. 117-23.

When the country learned of the events in Cracow, workers moved to the insurgents' help from near-by areas, especially the Dąbrowa Basin, but they did not succeed in getting past the cordons. There were also armed clashes in the oil-workers' town of Boryslaw, where three workers were killed by the police and soldiers, and in Tarnow, where five workers were killed.¹ The general strike and armed fighting in Cracow left its stamp on the Polish labour movement, although the revolutionary wave began to ebb after it.

THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST REVOLUTION IN IRELAND

After the proclamation of independence and founding of the Irish Republic, "the Troubles" developed in the country, i.e. actions by small guerrilla squads and groups in the towns and rural localities against a greatly superior enemy, British troops and police. In the summer of 1920 this war already embraced a considerable part of the Emerald Isle.² The organised Irish workers, whose struggle was the most effective part of the anti-colonial resistance, played an important role in it. Drivers, railwaymen, and dockers, protesting against the British authorities' attempts to make them their accomplices in the fight against the Irish Republican Army, went on strike. In the town and county of Limerick workers' councils were set up during a political strike, and for several days exercised the functions of local authority.

In April 1920 a national political strike was held at the call of the Executive Committee of the Irish CTU and the Irish Labour Party, which forced the colonial authorities to release many Republicans from gaol. The transport workers, who were in the vanguard of the strike movement, were on strike from May to November, protesting against the delivery of British weapons and the carriage of military freights and troops. Their struggle struck a heavy blow at the more vulnerable links of the British power set-up in Ireland depriving the British troops and police of freedom of movement and limiting their supplies of ammunition. That was a substantial help to the fighting IRA. According to the London *Daily News*, without the working class Sinn Féin would have broken its wings against prison bars.

At the same time a broad social movement developed. The workers went on strike for economic demands. In the West and South-West there was an "agrarian war" of small farmers and farm labourers, who seized the land of English landlords and big Irish graziers.

¹ *100 lat polskiego ruchu robotniczego*, p. 111.

² Desmond Williams (Ed.), *The Irish Struggle, 1916-1926*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1966, pp. 55-66; C.D. Greaves, *Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution*, London, 1971.

The leaders of Sinn Fein, however, while enjoying the support of the masses in the fight for national independence, at the same time supported the colonial authorities' efforts to stop the workers' social actions. The underground Government created by the Dáil defended the "sacred principle" of private property, and opposed the workers' economic struggle.¹ The bourgeoisie covered these anti-social actions by a demagogic slogan that the workers must wait until the country finally got its independence. Not only British troops, but also units of the IRA, took part in suppressing the agrarian unrest.

The line of the anarchosyndicalist and opportunist workers' leaders, which tended to deprive the labour movement of an independent political role, facilitated the manoeuvres of the bourgeoisie. The leadership of the Irish CTU and Irish Labour Party tried to form an anarchosyndicalist "One Big Union", alleged to be capable of preparing "direct action" and carrying it to the finish, i.e. a national economic strike that would eliminate capitalism. Given the mounting national liberation struggle, this led to a considerable part of the union-organised Irish workers going over to Sinn Fein without, however, getting representation in the Dáil. Since the leadership of the Irish CTU and Irish Labour Party did not support the workers' councils arising in the towns, they arose spontaneously, as strike committees, but immediately disbanded at the end of the strike.

The British Government, not having been able to suppress the emancipation movement by the military, was forced to negotiate with representatives of fighting Ireland. In December 1921 an Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed. The bulk of Ireland (except the six counties of the North-East) received the status of a British dominion, the Irish Free State. The supremacy of the British Crown was retained, and also the British naval bases, and payment of land-redemption payments to the British Government. The country was split; the industrial North-East (Ulster and its predominantly Protestant population) became an autonomous part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Half-a-million Irish Catholics remained under the direct power of the colonialists, as an "internal colony".

The incompleteness of the anti-imperialist revolution, because of the self-interest of the Irish bourgeoisie and the political immaturity of the workers' leaders, caused a polarisation of forces in the Irish national emancipation movement. A considerable part of the petty and medium urban bourgeoisie, some of the workers and farm labourers, and a significant majority (75 to 80 per cent) of the officers and soldiers of the IRA, rallied round the standard of the Republicans,

¹ *Dáil Éireann. Minutes of Proceedings of the First Parliament of the Republic of Ireland. 1919-1921. Official Record, Dublin, s.a.*

who opposed the Treaty. The representatives of the moderate circles of the national bourgeoisie who had signed the Treaty were inclined, on the contrary, to compromise with imperialism, fearing that a further deepening of the political confrontation would evoke a new upsurge of the masses' social struggle, with which they would be unable to cope. All the big proprietors of Ireland, who relied on the support of Great Britain and the local Catholic hierarchy, and exploited the weariness and certain disappointment of broad masses of the working people with Republican slogans that lacked social content, were up in arms against the Republicans.¹ The pseudo-class position of "neutrality" vis-à-vis the "tussle of the two bourgeois groupings" adopted by the official leadership of the Irish labour movement also played into the hands of reaction.

A new stage of the national emancipation revolution in Ireland began in the summer of 1922 with the outbreak of civil war. Initially the "irregulars" (i.e. units of the IRA), based on the strongholds and big towns of the south, tried to oppose the thousands-strong Free State army, built up and equipped with British help. The IRA was unable, however, to hold the area occupied, and was forced to withdraw to the mountains. From the end of 1922 it waged irregular, guerrilla warfare. Resistance lasted until April 1923 when the Prime Minister of the underground Republican government, Eamon de Valera, ordered the IRA to cease military action, without laying down its arms, but hiding them until better times.²

The main reason for the defeat of the Republican camp was its leadership's markedly negative attitude toward class struggle and democratic reforms in the socio-economic sphere. During the civil war the class struggle became very tense at least twice—in the summer and autumn of 1922—in the towns (mass occupation of factories, and the rise of a broad workers' council movement) and in the country (attacks on the estates of the surviving landlords and big graziers, who had seized considerable areas, illegal seizure and division of the lands belonging to them). If the Republicans had united political and social slogans they could have broadened their mass basis considerably and achieved a breakthrough in the course of the military actions. Their more far-sighted, progressive leaders, especially the Republican general and outstanding fighter against imperialism Liam Mellows (later shot by the Free Staters), called for this. The small, but selflessly militant Communist Party of Ireland made a big con-

¹ Rex Taylor, *Michael Collins*, Hutchinson, London, 1958; *Idem.*, *Assassination. The Death of Sir Henry Wilson and the Tragedy of Ireland*, Hutchinson, London, 1961.

² Eoin Neeson, *The Civil War in Ireland. 1921-1923*, Mercier Press, Cork, 1965.

tribution to the working out of such a programme. These proposals did not find support, however.¹

During the Irish revolution the foundations were laid for creating a politically independent bourgeois-democratic republic in the future. A new class, the Irish national bourgeoisie, came to power. In the spring of 1923 the Free State authorities were forced by the pressure of a powerful agrarian movement to carry out a new broad agrarian reform, ending landlordism in the main (but still retaining the land-redemption payments to Britain and the big graziers). The working class got better opportunities to develop its organisation and unite its ranks. At the same time, however, the revolution remained uncompleted, thus affecting the country's subsequent development. There was no sweeping socio-economic reconstruction of society. The key positions in the economy were retained by British capital, which preserved the division of the country. That was linked, to some extent, with the international situation—the decline in the revolutionary labour movement in Europe and America—which was unfavourable for the Irish revolution.

Soviet Russia proposed a treaty of co-operation and friendship to struggling Ireland in 1920, but the Sinn Féin leaders did not accept the offer thereby revealing their class narrow-mindedness. While calling the events of the Irish war for independence a revolution, Lenin saw its results as a success for the national emancipation forces. He considered it desirable for other oppressed countries, too, to win similar changes in their relations with the metropolitan countries, but at the same time distinctly saw the limited character of the Irish revolution, and called it “the Lloyd George method of ‘truncated revolution’”.²

THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT IN DECLINE

The defeats of the working class of Bulgaria, Germany, and Poland in the revolutionary battles of the autumn of 1923 ended the period of the transition of the working class of Europe from direct attempts to storm the capitalist system to besieging it. This period had already begun in the summer of 1921 when the ill-timed character of the “theory of offensive” was brought out and the communist movement took a line of preliminary winning of the support of the broad masses of the proletariat and its allies, and establishing a united workers’ and anti-imperialist front. In 1923 the working class of most countries was fighting only a limited struggle, beating off the con-

¹ *History of Ireland*, Moscow, 1980 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, “Draft Directives to the Deputy Chairman and All Members of the Genoa Delegation”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 393.

tinuing offensive of the employers, fascists, and reactionary governments.

It was a gloomy year for the workers of *Italy*. The fascist terror against Communists, but also against Socialists, Democrats, Liberals, and Catholics, had now acquired a state character, and the police were involved in it as well as the fascist thugs. Strikes practically ceased; the level of pay fell below prewar. The gains won in 1919-20 by stubborn struggle were wiped out. The trade unions, including the CGL, lost influence and their membership fell steeply.

Initially Mussolini kept many of the forms of the old state structure. He did not dissolve Parliament, but substituted a majority system for proportional representation; that, combined with repressive measures, guaranteed the National Bloc a two-thirds majority in the elections of 1924.¹ The opposition movement that arose within the fascist trade unions was quickly suppressed.²

The workers' organisations were faced, under fascism, with the extremely difficult task of maintaining their ranks and working out new tactics of struggle. A notable event that underlined the striving of the working class's revolutionary forces for unity was the appearance on 12 February 1924 of the first issue of the newspaper *Unità*, published jointly by the Communists and the "Third Internationalists".

In *France* the Communist Party had succeeded by the end of 1922 in overcoming vacillations on the policy of workers' united front. At its Paris Congress in October there was an overwhelming majority for the resolution of the supporters of the united front. The Party passed from discussion to application of the policy of united actions in practice. In November the Politbureau of the PCF proposed joint struggle for an amnesty of political prisoners to all labour organisations—the CGTU, CGT, the anarchist Union of Syndicates, the Socialist Party (SFIO), and the Association of Republican Ex-Servicemen (ARAC). The CGT and SFIO gave a refusal, which the SFIO, moreover, motivated (at its Congress in Lille in February 1923, in a resolution moved by Longuet on "The United Front and the Communists") by the Communists' alleged intention to exploit this tactic as a temporary manoeuvre aimed at destroying the Socialist Party.³ When the danger of occupation of the Ruhr by France arose in December, the Central Committee of the PCF set up an Action Committee, which was joined by representatives of the CGTU, Republican Ex-Servicemen, the Federation of Communist Youth, and the Union of Syndicates.

¹ B.P. Lopukhov, *Fascism and the Working-Class Movement in Italy*, Moscow, 1968 (in Russian).

² *The Militant Vanguard of the Working People of Italy*, Moscow, 1971, pp. 67-68 (in Russian).

³ Z.V. Chernukha, *The Founding of the French Communist Party*, pp. 277-91.

During the Ruhr conflict the PCF demonstrated growing political maturity and its attachment to the principles of proletarian internationalism. In spite of the authorities' repressive measures the Communist Party and the CGTU held huge protest demonstrations and rallies against the government's aggressive policy and a "propaganda week" against the occupation of the Ruhr, worked selflessly in the army, and took part in joint actions of solidarity with German workers. The number of strikes and strikers was somewhat greater in 1923 than in the previous year, but far below the level of 1920. After a long, persistent struggle against anarchosyndicalists within the CGTU, the Communist trade unionists, led by Gaston Monmousseau, won an impressive victory at an extraordinary congress in Bourges in November 1923. Decisions were taken approving the CGTU's entry into the RILU and supporting the German workers' revolutionary struggle.¹ The PCF consolidated its standing with the working class and also won sympathy among progressive intellectuals, one of whose eminent representatives, Henri Barbusse, joined its ranks.

In the autumn of 1923 there were elections for the National Assembly. The SFIO very earnestly discussed the question of creating a "Left Bloc" with the Radical and Radical Socialist Party. The PCF put forward a counter proposal of a "workers' and peasants' bloc" which it defined as not just an *electoral* "alliance of the working people of town and country—workers, peasants, office employees, and minor civil servants—of all who suffer from the dictatorship of the French moneybags and strive for a better social system". On 17 December 1923 the PCF proposed the following choice to the SFIO, either "to establish unity of action with the Communist Party so as to promote the working-class struggle against all the bourgeois, right or left, or with the Radical Party against the Communist Party, which absolutely refuses to practise class collaboration".² The Socialists left the proposal unanswered, and established a "Left Bloc" with the Radicals at the beginning of 1924.³

The failure of almost all the major actions of the working class of *Great Britain* in the early 1920s caused a certain shift in its consciousness. Disappointed by the tactics of "direct action", it began to pin its hopes on the Labour Party's coming into office. That led to rapid growth of its influence among the masses. In the elections for the House of Commons in November 1922, for instance, it got 4,200,000 votes and won 142 seats, outstripping the Liberal Party

¹ S.N. Gurvich, *The Labour Movement and the Left Bloc in France (1921-1926)*, Moscow, 1966, pp. 42-43 (in Russian).

² *L'Humanite*, 17 December, 1923. See also S.N. Gurvich, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.

³ S.S. Salychev, *The French Socialist Party Between the Two World Wars, 1921-1940*, Moscow, 1973, p. 59 (in Russian).

for the first time. And in December 1923 Labour, for which 4,400,000 voted, won 191 seats and soon formed the first Labour government, headed by Ramsay MacDonald.¹

The Communist Party of Great Britain also contributed its mite to the electoral success of the Labour Party. Not putting up its own candidates in constituencies where Labour was standing, it called on the workers to vote for Labour. The Communists' consistent struggle for unity of the working-class movement, their efforts to mobilise the masses to beat off the offensive of capital, and their participation in class battles (including the movement of the unemployed and the London dockers' strike in July 1923), enabled the CPGB to some extent to overcome its alienation from other sections of the organised workers. It began to develop into a significant factor in the British working-class movement.²

In Horthy *Hungary* every action against the authorities was suppressed with ruthless brutality. Terror was accompanied with social demagoguery and flirting with the masses. Being in constant fear of the possibility of new revolutionary actions by the working people, the Horthyists retained several institutions of bourgeois parliamentarism, tolerated bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties, and concluded a secret agreement in December 1921 with Károly Peyer, the leader of the Social-Democrats. In order to legalise his party he capitulated over the whole front, promising to follow a policy loyal to the authorities, to refrain from political agitation among the masses, not to carry on organisational work among civil servants, railwaymen, and agricultural workers, to prevent strikes, and to support the foreign policy of the Government.³ The Communist Party of Hungary remained deep underground.

In a bid to curb union activity and reduce Communist influence, the ruling circles of *Czechoslovakia* passed a Defence of the Republic Act in 1923 that gave the authorities greater opportunities to prosecute revolutionary workers' organisations and ban their press. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, having overcome its vacillations, put forward a slogan in September 1922 for a workers' government, accompanying it, however, with the following commentary from the resolution of its conference: "The need for a workers' government springs from a situation in which the working class is still too weak to send the bourgeois parliament to blazes, but its own class

¹ Ralph Miliband, *Parliamentary Socialism*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1961, pp. 93-95, 98, 100.

² I.N. Undasynov, *Communists and the Labour Party. 1919-1923*, p. 226; *Communists of Western Europe in the Struggle for a United Front. 1920-1923*, Moscow, 1977, pp. 273-78 (in Russian).

³ *Dokumentumok a magyar forradalmi munkásmozgalom Történetétől 1919-1929*, Budapest, 1964, pp. 150-52.

organs are strong enough not to tolerate the autocracy, veiled by the bourgeois parliament, and the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie".¹

The Communist Party of *Yugoslavia* attempted in 1923 to exploit the possibilities of open political activity still remaining and formed an Independent Workers' Party of Yugoslavia, which was to serve as its legal front. In the elections for the Narodna Skupština, this party got more than 24,000 votes, but in the spring of 1924 it was smashed by the authorities. There was a protracted discussion in the Communist Party on the national question during which the false idea of the existence of a single "trinomial Serbian-Croatian-Slovenian nation" was gradually overcome. With the help of the ECCI the Communists put "the full right of nations to self-determination" back into their programme and pointed out that the Party would fight to found "a voluntary federal state association of the nations of Yugoslavia—the most suitable form for the economic and cultural development both of the country as a whole and of its individual parts". "The creation of a single powerful workers' and peasants' bloc" was recognised to be a condition for successful struggle for the interests of the broad working masses and against national oppression.²

The working-class struggle in the *United States* noticeably declined in 1923, the AFL was losing influence, and there was a fall in the number of workers organised in trade unions. In those circumstances the union bureaucracy waged an intensive campaign of "class collaboration", at the same time carrying out mass expulsions of progressive activists and organisations from the unions. The position of the Trade Union Educational League, which was on the left wing, was weakened after it broke up the united front of Progressists in July 1923 over differences in regard to the founding of a Farmer-Labor Party.³

A certain easing of political reaction enabled the US Communists to decide, at a special convention in April 1923, to liquidate their Party's "underground" phase. The legal Workers' Party "now became in fact, if not in name, the Communist Party".⁴ At the end of the year its convention resolved to name it the Workers' (Communist) Party of America.

After the rice riots in *Japan* the workers' struggle began gradually to take on a less rebellious and more organised character. The number

¹ *Studijní materialy k dějinám Komunistické strany Československa v letech 1921-1924*, Prague, 1959, p. 265.

² *Historical Archives of the CPY*, Vol. 2, Belgrade, 1949, pp. 65-75 (in Serbo-Croat).

³ N.V. Kurkov, "The AFL in the 'Prosperity Years': Ideology, Policy, Tactics". In *American Yearbook 1973*, Moscow, 1973, p. 120 (in Russian).

⁴ Wm. Z. Foster, *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, International Publishers, New York, 1952, p. 215.

of strikes in 1917-22 was almost five times as high as in the preceding six years, and the number of strikers increased almost eightfold. Demands for an eight-hour day, wage rises, union recognition, and collective bargaining began to be put forward. The unions grew rapidly. During the struggle the progressive workers succeeded in converting the conciliationist Yuaikai union centre into a national class organisation, the Japan Federation of Labour Unions (Sódómei). The unions began to play a more significant role in political affairs, having established links initially with the socialist, and then with the communist movement.

A wave of rent disputes also rose in the countryside: from 85 in 1918 to 1,680 in 1921.¹ The landless peasants and smallholders demanded a land reform and reduction of rent. The initiators of the actions were often ex-servicemen who had been involved in the intervention in Soviet Russia and who had joined the emancipation movement on their return to Japan. In April 1922 the Japanese Peasants' Union was formed on the initiative of the Japan Federation of Labour Unions; it soon became a mass organisation with 675 local branches and more than 50,000 members.² Intellectuals, students, women, and Japanese outcasts were also drawn into the struggle.

The influence of anarchosyndicalism, which had deep roots in the working-class movement, and had exerted a strong influence during the upsurge of 1918-20, could not be overcome on the basis of Social-Democracy. Only when Marxist literature, including works by Lenin, began to be published in Japan did trade union activists and progressive workers begin to join Socialist and Communist groups.³ The need to build a party of the working class capable of leading the working people's emancipation struggle began to be more and more evident. On 15 July 1922 the Communist Party of Japan was founded through the uniting of various workers' and students' Socialist groups of a leftist orientation. An important role was played in that by Sen Katayama, Kyuichi Tokuda, and other revolutionaries who had taken part in the Congress of Working People of the Far East in January and February 1922.

In March 1923 an Extraordinary Congress of the CPJ in Tokyo discussed the Party's draft programme. Although it was not finally adopted, because of the arrest of the Party's leaders, and still contained immature propositions, it was important as the first attempt to apply Marxist-Leninist theory to the concrete conditions of Ja-

¹ Inumaru Giichi, *Revolutionary Russia and Japan*, Tokyo, 1975, p. 14 (in Japanese).

² I.I. Kovalenko, *Essays in the History of the Communist Movement in Japan*, Moscow, 1979, p. 63 (in Russian).

³ P. P. Topekha, "From the History of the Dissemination of Lenin's Ideas in Japan", *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No 9, 1970, pp. 50-60.

pan. In the main it gave a correct evaluation of the impending revolution as a bourgeois-democratic one with prospects of developing into a socialist revolution. The programme called for abolition of imperial power, the Privy Council and House of Peers, disbandment of the armed forces, gendarmerie and police, introduction of universal franchise and democratic freedoms, the establishing of an eight-hour day and the right to strike, recognition of trade unions and institution of social insurance, confiscation of the lands of big landlords and their transfer to tenant peasants, and democratisation of the taxation system. Demands were also made to stop intervention of any kind in foreign countries, and for complete withdrawal of Japanese troops from Korea, Taiwan, and North Sakhalin; that showed that the CPJ took a stand of proletarian solidarity from its very foundation.¹

Although the Communist Party was still weak theoretically, politically and organisationally, its ties with the masses weak and the influence of anarchosyndicalist and reformist ideas still there, it immediately engaged in vigorous activity. But it had to work in extremely difficult conditions of persecution by the authorities. During the devastating earthquake in the Tokyo-Yokohama area in September 1923 a wave of violence, arrests and murders hit the Communists, Socialists and Anarchists. The labour movement suffered a severe blow, it was deprived of its militant leadership. The weakening of the Communist Party was exploited by the right-wing leaders of Social-Democracy who managed to win back lost positions. Under their influence, the leaders of the Japan Federation of Labour Unions adopted a line of dissociating it completely from the communist movement, trying to steer union activity into a channel of narrow unionism and class collaboration. That led to a split and a protracted decline in the labour movement in Japan.

* * *

In order to counteract the offensive of reaction and fascism developed in 1923 against the revolutionary gains of the working class the international labour movement needed first and foremost unity. But the united front policy, while helping ensure joint actions of various contingents and organisations of the proletariat, was still at the formation stage. While the Communist Parties, overcoming with difficulty their distrust of Social-Democratic leaders and sectarian sentiments, were looking for practical ways towards the united front, these leaders, having frustrated the conference of the three Internationals, were busy consolidating the organisations that

¹ Hattori Siso, *Essays in the Working-Class Movement in Japan*, (translated from the Japanese) Moscow, 1975, p. 88; *50 Years of the CPJ*, Tokyo, 1973, pp. 19-22 (in Japanese).

adopted a general platform of reformism. In September 1922 the centrist Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany returned to the fold of old Social-Democracy. Right-wing trends became stronger in the French Socialist Party (SFIO). Social-Democracy evolved in a similar direction in Austria, although there it tried to retain its own Austro-Marxist revolutionary phraseology. Similar processes occurred in other Social-Democratic and Socialist Parties.

After several preliminary conferences the *International Workers' Socialist Congress* was convened in Hamburg on May 21 to 25, 1923. Parties belonging to the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals took part (426 delegates and 194 guests, representing 43 parties from 30 countries). Its anti-communist tone was set in the welcome address by the representative of the United Social-Democratic Party of Germany, Otto Wels. Declaring all proposals for a united front to be "demagogy", he claimed that "you cannot stand strong against reaction if you are weak vis-à-vis communism".¹

The reporter on the struggle against international reaction, Otto Bauer, displayed more flexibility. He spoke of the need above all to frustrate the imperialists' plans to renew anti-Soviet intervention. After all, even Arthur Henderson deemed it necessary to dissociate himself from the Curzon Ultimatum and threats of war, noting that it was high time for Britain, which had not even thought of breaking off diplomatic relations with Mussolini's Italy or Horthy's Hungary, to restore diplomatic and trade relations with the Soviet Union.²

Otto Bauer, pointing out the dangerous centre of bourgeois, monarchist and nationalist reaction being created in Germany, emphasised that French imperialism had helped increase this danger by its occupation of the Ruhr. In that connection a polemic over national attitudes developed at the Congress. The British delegate Sidney Webb argued for economic revival of Germany. The Frenchman Léon Blum diplomatically criticised the Treaty of Versailles, declaring it, however, to be not an act of regression but rather one of "insufficient progress". He considered the occupation of the Ruhr to be only an unsuitable means of resolving the problem of indemnities and called for an understanding to be displayed towards the economic difficulties of France herself. More overt nationalism was manifest in the speech by the Belgian Emile Vandervelde. The Congress adopted a resolution that condemned the occupation of the Ruhr, but, instead of vigorously opposing it, recommended putting pressure on the Entente governments and on the German capitalist class and Ger-

¹ *Protokoll des Internationalen Sozialistischen Arbeiterkongresses in Hamburg vom 21. bis. 25. Mai 1923*, Berlin, 1923, pp. 4-5.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16, 19-24.

man Government, to inform world public opinion, and so on.¹

Bauer, furthermore, condemned Italian fascism which had destroyed all elements of democracy in Italy and brutally crushed the proletariat. Nevertheless, neither he nor other speakers in the discussion were able to give any kind of deep socio-political assessment of fascism as a new phenomenon internationally. In their opinion it went no further than terrorism. Only insofar as Italian fascism encouraged the revival of reactionary forces in all other countries, "the fight against fascism, against its root, its starting point and its centre is also an international duty". In Bauer's view, however, the fight against Italian fascism, the Horthy regime, the domination of the Romanian boyars, etc., should not go beyond "mobilisation of moral strength". It was a matter, he persistently stressed, "not of uprisings, not even of a general strike. I have in mind above all exchange of information, the breaking down of the wall of silence surrounding the subjugated countries".

J.E. Modigliani, who had come up face to face with Italian fascists, pointed out the obvious inadequacy of these appeals to the moral factor. But, while calling for a fight "to win political power", he had in mind, as soon became apparent, merely recommendation for Socialists to join coalition governments with left bourgeois parties. Other speakers took a similar stand. The Hungarian Zsigmond Kunfi included "the example of Russian Communism" among the causes of the triumph of reaction. Otto Wels, who declared that the Weimar Republic was a model of democracy, claimed that its opponents had two assistants, "Moscow Communism and Marxian militarism". The Congress resolution on the struggle against international reaction was composed of general phrases and claimed that restoration of democracy throughout the world would provide adequate conditions to guarantee the victory of socialism.²

The Centrists of the Vienna International capitulated all along the line to the right-wing leaders of the London International. The Congress resolutions contained no recognition of the need for proletarian revolution. Its place was taken by a policy of coalitions of Social-Democracy and bourgeois parties. Karl Kautsky had called, the year before, for the psychological barrier against a coalition policy to be surmounted, which he claimed, would open a slow, but nevertheless sure path to proletarian power. His formula now became the banner of all reformists, and the Congress greeted his entry into the hall with a stormy ovation.

The Hamburg Congress declared the founding of the *Labour and Socialist International* (LSI) as the successor to the traditions of the

¹ *Protokoll...*, pp. 25-29.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 38-40, 73, 76, 106.

prewar Second International. Arthur Henderson was elected chairman, and Fritz Adler and Tom Shaw secretaries. Otto Bauer, A.M. Bracke (Desrousseaux), Hjalmar Branting, Emile Vandervelde, Otto Wels, J.E. Modigliani, Pieter Troelstra were among those elected to the Bureau of the Executive Committee. London became the seat of the Executive Committee. Jan Oudegeest, who attended the Congress as representative of the Amsterdam Trade Union International, called for co-operation of the two organisations while leaving the IFTU its independence. At the time, the parties joining the Labour and Socialist International represented a considerable force. They had more than 6,700,000 members in the main citadels of capitalism (half of them members of the British Labour Party).

The preamble to the Constitution adopted included the following formulation: "The Labour and Socialist International unites socialist and labour parties that set themselves the aim to replace the capitalist mode of production with the socialist mode of production and view the class struggle, expressed in political and economic action, as a means of liberation of the working class." The rapporteur F. Adler felt this formula was not only appropriate, but also so "unambiguous that it can be adopted by the entire proletariat with clear conscience". In order to deliver the Executive Committee from the "problem of ministerialism" a special reservation was included into the Constitution saying that "the entry of a member of the Executive Committee into a government automatically cancels his membership in the Executive Committee. After he leaves the government his re-election to the Executive Committee immediately becomes possible."¹

The Congress resolutions contained a warning, quite pertinent, about the shift of the bourgeoisie towards reaction: "The classes becoming aware of the menace of the growing strength of the working class forsake the democratic form of government and resort to violence so as to tilt the balance of forces between classes into their favour. The working class must defend democracy from the methods of violence employed by the bourgeoisie."² The Congress also came out, in a general form, for labour unity in the struggle against capitalism³.

Practical measures in this spirit could have created favourable conditions for co-operation between the LSI and the communist movement. But these declarations were mere phrase-mongering, a concession to the popular sentiment. Meanwhile, F. Adler undertook to reject a united front of the proletariat in the struggle against reaction, fascism and war. He turned down the proposal to this effect

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 48, 50, 97-98.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 104-05.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

made by a delegation of the International Action Committee Against the Threat of War and Fascism set up 2 months before the Congress at a conference in Frankfurt-on-the-Main. The delegation suggested a discussion of joint actions, yet Adler replied that the Congress was busy working on serious and hard tasks and did not want to engage in "fruitless talks". This refusal to materialise the will of the masses for unity of action was combined with the trite slander that the Communists denied "self-determination of the proletariat" and wanted "the dictatorship of a small clique to dominate a large mass".¹ The social-reformist platform worked out by the Hamburg Congress was combined with anti-communism and out-and-out anti-Sovietism.

It was no accident that the new International rejected the united proletarian front policy right from the start. The Executive Committee of the Comintern, which made a thorough review of this policy at its Third Enlarged Plenum in June 1923, evaluated the Labour and Socialist International's leaders' striving to avoid and evade united actions as evidence that "they fear any real fight for the interests of the proletariat", and instead, still "wished to fetter the workers to the bourgeoisie by means of democratic and socialist phrases, as they themselves are fettered". The plenum again stressed that revolutionaries could win in competition with reformists "solely on the basis of struggle for the united front of the proletariat, carried on nationally and internationally".²

The broad discussion of the united front at the ECCI Enlarged Plenum helped clarify its goals for Communists. The resolution adopted stressed: "This struggle for the united front must be carried on more systematically and decisively in every country, and in the most concrete and popular manner", so that the "united front" of Social-Democrats and the bourgeoisie and their coalition policy, would be opposed by "the joint struggle of all labor parties for the workers' and peasants' government".³ At the same time it became clear that certain leaders of the Comintern, G. E. Zinoviev among them, had not shaken off ideas that the united front tactic was simply "a strategic manoeuvre".⁴

The session of the ECCI displayed an understanding on the whole of the essence and character of fascism. In its appeal it described fascism as a "socially motley riotous throng", an "aggressive force" which the bourgeoisie employed and supported with the explicit aim to use fascism "in order to suppress the proletariat and keep it enslaved for a long time to come." For all its national differences fascism combined crude terrorist violence with pseudo-revolutionary

¹ *Protokoll...*, p. 50.

² *International Press Correspondence*, August 16, 1923, 56(34), p. 605.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *International Press Correspondence*, June 22, 1923, No. 45, p. 439.

phraseology, demagogic speculation on the needs and moods of the broad masses of the working people fed up with the reformists in Socialist Parties and trade unions, and not finding application for their activity. The ECCI warned the working class of the world of the fascist danger and called on labour parties and organisations of all trends to unite nationally and internationally to develop a joint, anti-fascist struggle.

The danger from fascism to the whole labour movement and its democratic and social gains made Lenin's idea even more meaningful, namely that Communists not only needed to be patient in their practical activity to win the confidence of the masses but also should think deeply about new approaches in theory. This concerned both the penetration into the dialectics of the interconnection of *national and international tasks* and understanding of the variability and mobility of the relation between *democracy and socialism*.

In the former case it was primarily a matter of knowing how to correlate such factors as the building of socialism in the USSR and the world revolutionary process, peaceful coexistence and the struggle of the workers in capitalist countries for social and national emancipation, the struggle of the workers of the imperial countries and the liberation movement of the colonial and dependent nations.

In the latter case it was becoming necessary to look at Communists' attitude to bourgeois democracy from a new angle. Back in the 19th century, in the process of emergence of the socialist workingmen's movement from the general democratic movement various situations had already arisen—from the convergence of these trends to opposition and acute struggle between them. In the period after the October Revolution the relation between democracy and socialism became even more complicated. For instance, in the period of direct revolutionary assault, of the separation between revolutionaries and reformists and formation of independent Communist Parties and the Comintern, a rigid and direct *opposition* of bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat, of parliamentarism and Soviet power, became inevitable. "Anti-Kautsky", and Lenin's report on bourgeois democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat at the First Congress of the Comintern are the clearest documents of that period.

But when, in the early 1920s, the revolutionary process slowed down and the task of winning the masses, the majority, came to the fore, there was a turn to a new *combining* by the working class of the struggle for democracy and for socialism. It was a matter both of combining general democratic and socialist goals and of looking for forms of united action of Communists, Social-Democrats and, more broadly, those supporters of petty-bourgeois democracy who were not, for one reason or another, ready to fight for socialism.

This new approach, the main outlines of which are to be found in Lenin's '*Left-Wing*' Communism and the resolutions and theses of the Third Congress of the Comintern, did not, however, mean a simple turn back to the formula of 1916 which read that "one should know how to *combine* the struggle for democracy and the struggle for the socialist revolution, *subordinating* the first to the second".¹ Since the Russian Revolution had opened an epoch of struggle of two antagonistic systems, socialism and capitalism, and consequently of two different types of democracy, proletarian and bourgeois, it was now no longer possible (either theoretically or practically) to refrain from *counterposing* them. It was both possible and necessary to supplement this counterposing by a *combined* struggle of the workers of capitalist countries for democracy and for the socialist revolution. For that purpose Communists put forward transitional and partial demands, the tactic of the united labour front, and the slogan of a worker-peasant government. The tasks of the struggle for democracy were not exhausted now by finishing the cleansing of the Augean stables of the Middle Ages, not completed by capitalism (even in the most advanced countries), and the winning of bourgeois-democratic freedoms so as to clear the stage for the future struggle for socialism. This struggle was increasingly dictated by the need to *defend democracy* (even the democracy limited and curtailed by capitalism) against the mounting encroachments on it by imperialism and reaction, against the menace of fascism and a new war.

The policy of the international Communist movement moved in the same direction, i.e. increasing the numbers of participants in the general democratic struggle, in relation to the national liberation movement of the dependent, semi-colonial and colonial countries. The programme of a united anti-imperialist front opened up new opportunities for the revolutionary democratic potential of the oppressed nations, bringing their liberation struggle closer to the social fight of the revolutionary proletariat of the developed countries.

Great credit is due to Lenin for opening up these perspectives; he, best of all, listened to the pulse of history and knew how to find the answers to the problems being raised by life.

The Comintern and the Communist Parties had to sum up the results of the revolutionary battles of 1923 without his participation. An important lesson was drawn from the defeats of the working class of Germany and Bulgaria, viz., that Communist Parties had not yet fully mastered the methods of leading the broad masses, and ability to combine an assault with tactical flexibility, though they had learned to display revolutionary initiative, energy and fighting ability. At the same time the Comintern and Communist Parties did not know

¹ V.I. Lenin, "To Inessa Armand", *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, p. 267.

how fully to analyse the reasons for failures and draw the necessary conclusions.

The enlarged Central Committee meeting of the KPD in November 1923 did not appreciate the scale of the Communists' defeat and the seriousness of the mistakes they had made. Furthermore, it claimed, in its resolution, that fascism had won a victory over the Weimar Republic with the help of right-wing Social-Democratic leaders, but had not beaten the working class. From that there followed the conclusion that Communists should drop the tactic of a united front with Social-Democracy in the future and themselves prepare for an armed uprising to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. During the broad discussion that developed within the KPD the view was expressed that the Party leadership had missed favourable revolutionary opportunities and that its chief mistake had been retreat without fighting, and leaving Hamburg to the mercy of fate. The "Saxony experiment" was also criticised. The three trends that evolved in the Party appealed to the Presidium of the ECCI. After a detailed discussion the Presidium and representatives of the Central Committee of the KPD passed a comprehensive resolution on the lessons of the German events.¹

This resolution said that when a revolutionary crisis had arisen in Germany, the Central Committee of the KPD, while orienting the working class on struggle for power had made mistakes in its appreciation of the masses' level of revolutionary preparedness and the balance of class forces, and also tactical miscalculations, and had not overcome the political and organisational weakness of the Party. Responsibility for the failures was laid on the right-wing opportunist leadership of Brandler and Thalheimer. The resolution stressed that incorrect implementation of the united front tactic by no means meant that the tactic itself was mistaken.

At the same time the Presidium of the ECCI itself, when concretising the general propositions, took a mistaken, left-sectarian stand on a number of issues of principle. Zinoviev, for instance, reproached the German Communists not for having been unable to carry out the united front policy but for not having displayed resolution in "reviving" the slogan of Soviet power and not having broken openly with the Left Social-Democrats. In agreement with those who exaggerated the role of the fascists, he claimed that the attitude to German Social-Democracy should be completely reviewed, because it was nothing else than "fraction of German fascism in a socialist mask", or "a wing of fascism". Left Social-Democracy was declared the "arch-enemy" (even more dangerous than Scheidemann and Ebert).

¹ *The Lessons of the German Events*, published by the Communist International, 1924.

Zinoviev advised the KPD to declare publicly that it would refuse any kind of agreement from now on with both the leadership of German Social-Democracy and the group of left-wingers; he reduced the slogan of a workers' and peasants' government (and in essence the whole tactic of the united front) to exposure of Social-Democracy, which would fall to pieces with a crash in the not distant future, or burst like a soap bubble.¹

These statements were made in a somewhat whittled down form in the Presidium's resolution: "The leading strata of the German Social Democrats are at the present moment nothing else than a fraction of German Fascism under a socialist mask." Moreover it was said that "the whole international Social Democracy is gradually becoming the official armour bearer of the Capitalist dictatorship. But even more dangerous than the right wing of the Social Democratic leaders are the left-wing leaders ... these last fig leaves covering the counter-revolutionary policy." Any talks with Social-Democratic leaders were rejected.

There is no doubt that such a sharply negative evaluation of Social-Democracy was largely the reaction of Communists and revolutionary workers to the Social-Democratic leaders' behaviour at the time of the fighting in the autumn of 1923, when they acted as open defenders of the capitalist system. The revival of sectarian trends in the Comintern and Communist Parties caused by that had an impact, however, on the policy of the united front, too. Although the ECCI's resolution spoke of "unity from below" and about continuing united front tactics, they began to be curtailed from then on. Here, for example, is how the immediate tasks of the KPD were defined: "The Party propaganda must be directed towards making the broadest masses conscious that *only the dictatorship of the proletariat* can serve them. This task must be bound up with the aim of politically *annihilating the Social Democratic Party*." Although right after that the resolution spoke about setting up organs of the united front, this could in no way serve as a basis for any unity of worker action, the less so that a rather risky and overtly sectarian task was set in to convince every Communist that his party "is strong enough to prepare for and achieve the victory of the masses of the proletariat against all other parties".²

Other voices were also heard at the session of the Presidium where the resolution was drawn up. Wilhelm Pieck, for example, moved a special amendment that contained criticism of the "leftists" who repudiated transitional forms of power and the united front. Clara Zetkin said that the "Left Opposition" in the KPD made "great mis-

¹ *Inprekorr*, 1924, No 22, pp. 239-43.

² *The Lessons of the German Events*, pp. 72-75. (Our italics.— Ed.)

takes and had serious shortcomings" that should be censured. She considered the formulation of the thesis that the Social-Democrats were a fraction of fascism to have a "certain narrowness and bigotry, so that we risk being impractical in the real conditions".¹ But these serious considerations were not taken into account. The warnings expressed in the letter from the leadership of the Communist Party of Poland, that any formulations were mistaken that could be interpreted as censure of the united front tactic, also made no impression.

The continuation of the discussion of the "German question" at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern in the summer of 1924 did not correct the position, but on the contrary made it worse. The resolutions passed, which became directives for the whole communist movement, spoke of the conversion of Social-Democracy into a "wing of fascism" and said that fascism and Social-Democracy were "the right and the left arm of contemporary capitalism", or "two spikes of the same weapon of the dictatorship of big capital." The united front tactics was given an extremely narrow interpretation, as "only a method of agitation and revolutionary mobilisation of the masses", as "a strategic manoeuvre". Although Clara Zetkin again raised objections to the statement that the workers' and peasants' government was "only a pseudonym, a synonym or some other 'nym, in the resolution it was called "translation into the language of revolution, into the language of popular masses, of the slogan 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'".

Things were made worse because not only Zinoviev but also Stalin gave an extremely sharp evaluation of Social-Democracy. "Social-Democracy," he wrote, "is objectively a modern wing of fascism," fascism and Social-Democracy, in his view, were "not antipodes, but twins". This orientation did serious harm to the international communist movement and its struggle for unity of the working class. It took much time and great efforts to overcome it. It took the new historical experience garnered in the following years to reach a conclusion about the possibility and necessity of joint actions in the fight against fascism and war.

INTERNATIONAL PROLETARIAN SOLIDARITY

Right from its birth the Russian Soviet Republic had inscribed the principle of internationalism and fraternal cooperation with the working people and exploited of the world on its banner. It raised prole-

¹ *Die Lehrer der deutschen Ereignisse. Das Präsidium des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale zur deutschen Frage. Januar 1924*, Verlag der Kommunistischen Internationale, Hamburg, 1924, pp. 85, 86.

tarian internationalism to the level of class and state policy, making it a vital component of its relations with the international revolutionary movement and the struggle of the workers of various countries for their social and national emancipation. The Soviet Republic saw it as its duty to render support of every kind to all revolutionaries battling against imperialists and exploiters. It was ready to share its last crust of bread with them, not in words, but in deeds. It made great sacrifices in order to establish friendly, equal relations with other countries, especially with those that suffered from oppression, always raised its voice in defence of the liberation movement, and gave it material aid as well as moral support whenever there was the slightest opportunity.

But in its first years the young Soviet Republic itself also had an extreme need for the fraternal support of the proletarians of other countries. Foreign military intervention, economic blockade, and the imperialists' refusal to recognise the Soviet Republic did it incalculable damage. And when it finally got the chance to start on peaceful reconstruction of its ruined economy, it was hit by a terrible famine.

On July 30, 1921 the ECCI and the Executive Committee of the CYI published an appeal to the working men and women of all countries. It said: "Soviet Russia has fought and suffered for the sake of the whole international proletariat. The wounds it is now bleeding white with were received in the struggle against world capital, in the struggle for the interests of not only the Russian revolutionary proletariat, but the world proletariat, too.... We know that you are poor yourselves and have no bread to spare. But we also know that when a misfortune befalls a worker family the poorest worker helps more than rich men... At this point we shall see where the international solidarity of the proletariat is a mere verbal expression and where it is manifested in deed... Every car-load of grain that labour organisations deliver to the famine-stricken regions will bolster the courage of the Russian workers in their fight against famine and serve as authentic proof for the hard suffering masses in Russia that they are not alone, not a solitary fighter standing against the entire capitalist world."

On August 2 Lenin wrote in an appeal to the international proletariat: "Those who have suffered from capitalist oppression all their lives will understand ... will grasp or, guided by the instinct of working and exploited people, will sense the need of helping the Soviet Republic, whose lot it was to be the first to undertake the hard but gratifying task of overthrowing capitalism."¹

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Appeal to the International Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 502.

An International Committee of Proletarian Aid was soon set up in Berlin, headed by Clara Zetkin and Willi Münzenberg. It included outstanding cultural figures like Henri Barbusse, Anatole France, George Bernard Shaw and Albert Einstein. Anatole France donated his Nobel Prize money to the relief fund. In September 1921 the committee was converted into the International Workers' Relief (IWR) organisation. National committees were formed in more than 30 countries, but only in France, Italy and Czechoslovakia did they soon unite various proletarian organisations.

A Society of Friends of Soviet Russia was formed in the USA on the initiative of Communists; in 1921 it collected \$ 250,000 and a considerable quantity of food. On the whole by 1923, workers' organisations had sent goods and money to a total of over £ 5,000,000 to Soviet Russia.¹ Around 100 ships and railway trains from the USA, France, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Holland, Ireland, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria brought wheat, sugar, fish, medicines, clothing, footwear, farm machinery, and around 40,000 tonnes of seed. In the autumn of 1921 the IWR held an exhibition of pictures and posters in Berlin, special stamps and postcards were sold in Switzerland, and flower days were held in Britain, France, Holland and the Scandinavian countries. The money collected was contributed to the famine relief fund.

The Amsterdam International Federation of Trade Unions could not stand aside from the broad movement of international solidarity. It independently collected money and sent several shiploads of food and other prime necessities to Russia. According to the IFTU's own figures, the total collected by the end of 1923 was two million Dutch Guilder (£ 180,000).²

At the end of 1922, Lenin wrote about the role of the world workers' solidarity: "The assistance given to the starving by the international working class helped Soviet Russia in considerable measure to endure the painful days of last year's famine and to overcome it."³ According to the figures announced at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern, the Soviet Government distributed 165 million poods of grain (around 2,640,000 metric tonnes) to the starving, and the International Workers' Relief and other organisations 33 million poods (528,000 tonnes).⁴

The International Workers' Relief also helped restore Soviet Russia's

¹ W. Münzenberg, *Solidarität. Zehn Jahre Internationale Arbeiterhilfe. 1921-1931*, Berlin, 1931.

² *Tätigkeitsbericht des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes über die Jahre 1922 und 1923*, Amsterdam, 1924, p. 78.

³ V.I. Lenin, "To Comrade Münzenberg, Secretary of the International Workers' Aid", *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, p. 559.

⁴ *Protokoll des 4. Kongresses KI*, p. 545.

economy. In 1922 a technical organisation was set up in Berlin, subsequently known as Aufbau, and an international proletarian loan was floated to provide financial help. The IWR organised fund raising to buy industrial equipment, instruments and farm machinery and deliver them to the Soviet Republic. By agreement with the Soviet Government it rented a number of farms and factories in which 25,000 to 30,000 workers (mainly Soviet) were employed in the autumn of 1922¹. In December 1922 Lenin wrote to Willi Münzenberg: "The work of economic assistance, so happily begun by the International Workers' Aid to Soviet Russia, should be supported in every possible way by the workers and toilers of the whole world.... Widespread economic aid by the world proletariat is at present the best and most practical support of Soviet Russia in her difficult economic war against the imperialist concerns, and the best support for her work of building a socialist economy".²

The IWR also did a great deal in the realm of culture. It founded a film studio Mezhrabpom-Rus (subsequently known as Mezhrabpom-Film), which made dozens of documentary and feature films about the October Revolution, the civil war and the life of the Soviet people. Committees for cultural and scientific and technical relations with Soviet Russia arose in many countries, and grew into societies of Friends of Soviet Russia in Germany, Holland, the USA and France.

Help for Soviet Russia in reviving industry and agriculture was also given by various national proletarian organisations. As early as 1919, in the USA and Canada immigrants from Russia founded a Society for Technical Aid to Soviet Russia. A convention of this Society's branches, held in New York in July 1921, decided to found a strong labour and technical organisation of people prepared to go to Russia to work.

In November 1920 members of New York unions, representing 800,000 organised workers, founded the American Labor Alliance to Promote Trade with Russia. Calling on the State Department to establish trade relations with Soviet Russia, it pointed out that normalisation would help reduce unemployment in the United States. The Alliance got the support of 12 internationals and nationals of the AFL, many state federations and the central labour councils of 72 cities, representing more than 2 million workers.³

The Soviet government paid great attention to the organisation of immigration from abroad. In the spring and summer of 1920

¹ *Pravda*, November 1, 1922.

² V.I. Lenin, "To Comrade Münzenberg...", *op. cit.*, pp. 559-60.

³ V.L. Malkov, "The Great October Revolution and the Labour Movement in the USA (1917-1922)," *The American Yearbook*, 1978, Moscow, 1978, pp. 38-39 (in Russian).

radio broadcasts from Moscow were speaking of the need for a preliminary sending of special delegations to study living conditions, food supplies and housing on the spot, while Lenin specially stressed that "the foreign workers must know the truth, that in settling here they are accepting privation".¹ Immigrants had to sign the pledge "to work their hardest and with the greatest efficiency and discipline exceeding those of capitalist standards, as otherwise Russia will not be able to outstrip capitalism or even catch up with it".²

On June 22, 1921 the Council of Labour and Defence passed a special resolution on American industrial immigration.

The first contract, on the transfer of the Moscow automobile works AMO to a group of American Communist re-immigrants, was signed in February 1921. Then clothing workers were permitted to organise a factory in Moscow using imported machinery. The biggest contract was one to rent part of the Kuznetsk coal basin to the Autonomous Industrial Colony of the Kuzbass in the Kemerovo area. The Dutch Communist engineer Sebald J. Rutgers, and William Haywood, leader of the Industrial Workers of the World, were at the head of it. In April 1923 there were 230 immigrant workers, of more than 20 nationalities, working in the work force of 2,000 of the mines and the coke-and-chemical works of Kemerovo.³

The American Society for Technical Aid organised a party of electrical engineers who had undertaken to help with electrification, to go to Russia. Between the end of 1921 and October 1922 it sent seven farm parties and two building groups, a mining commune, and several other groups to Soviet Russia, which brought machines, seed, food and equipment with them to the value of some £ 500,000. The farming communes set up by the Society worked with success in the Tambov and Odessa Provinces, while a group of American miners worked in the Donbass. In the summer of 1922, a tractor team headed by the Communist agronomist Harold Ware arrived in Russia, sent by the Friends of Soviet Russia. It brought 21 tractors and worked on the Toykino State Farm in the Perm Province, successfully demonstrating the advantages of mechanised working of the land to the peasants.⁴

At the same time work in the Soviet Republic was a good school of labour and political education for members of the working class of capitalist countries, who discovered the superiority of the new,

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Postscript to a Radio Message of May 6, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, p. 525.

² V.I. Lenin, "A Letter to V.V. Kuibyshev and a Draft Engagement for Workers Going to Russia from America", *Collected Works*, Vol. 42, p. 345.

³ G.J. Tarle, *Friends of the Soviet Country*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 117-18, 287, 320 (in Russian).

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 264-81.

socialist relations. As Ware remarked, that work "enriched us with knowledge of the lessons of the Revolution and of Communist organisation".¹ In October 1922 the Toykino State Farm and the communes in the Tambov and Odessa Provinces were declared model farms by the Central Executive Committee, on a proposal from Lenin. In thanking both Societies Lenin said: "No form of assistance is as timely and as important for us as that which you are rendering."²

When the imperialists' attacks on the Soviet Union became sharper in 1923, the workers of many countries increased their actions demanding its recognition and cessation of provocation. The Labor Alliance for Propaganda for Recognition of Russia, founded in the United States, held a meeting of 6,000 in New York on March 19, at which Senator Borah declared that the Soviet Union satisfied all requirements and was Europe's only government that could then pursue an absolutely independent policy.³

The workers of Great Britain protested against the threat to break off trade relations and abrogate the Anglo-Soviet Trade Agreement, holding big demonstrations in response to the Curzon Ultimatum. William Gallacher said at one meeting that the reason for Curzon's threat was that Russia was slowly but surely laying a solid foundation for restoring its economy. The British working class would not let the imperialist gamblers throw dust in their eyes.⁴ Workers in Sweden, Germany and India condemned the foreign policy of the British ruling circles. International Workers' Relief issued a Hands off Soviet Russia appeal, signed by Clara Zetkin, Martin Andersen-Nexö, Henri Barbusse, Maxim Gorky and Willi Münzenberg.

In those hard times, when the Soviet people themselves were suffering sore trials, they invariably responded to every event abroad that called for material aid as well as moral and political support. When the British miners went on strike in April 1921, for instance, the Fourth All-Russia Trade Union Congress resolved to send them 200,000 gold roubles. In the course of a few months an aid campaign was carried out in many areas of Soviet Russia. In the autumn of 1921 the Soviet working class expressed fraternal solidarity with the striking workers of France. "The Russian proletariat is following your fight with profound sympathy," the Soviet Central TU Council (AUCCTU) wrote, sending the workers 10,000 francs "as a sign of fraternal solidarity, and regretting that we cannot send more to our fighting brothers under the present circumstances in starving Russia."⁵ In 1922 Soviet workers rendered material aid to striking

¹ G. J. Tarle, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

² V.I. Lenin, "To the Society of Friends of Soviet Russia (in the USA)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 380.

³ Reported in *Pravda*, March 21, 1923.

⁴ Reported in *Rabochaya Moskva*, May 15, 1923.

⁵ *Trud*, October 2, 1921.

woodworkers in Italy, and tobacco and tannery workers in Bulgaria.

The occupation of the Ruhr had hardly begun than the whole Soviet Republic was swept by a wave of protest meetings and gatherings, and collection of donations began. On January 29, 1923 the Presidium of the AUCCTU, expressing the feelings of the working people of the USSR decided to send the struggling Ruhr workers 100,000 gold roubles. The campaign developed particularly strongly among Soviet miners. At the beginning of February the Third Plenum of the Central Committee of the All-Russia Mineworkers' Union resolved to allocate 100,000 roubles to the striking miners of the Ruhr, and published an anthology *The Ruhr Is Ours* in 300,000 copies, the proceeds from the sale of which were paid into the relief fund. A sizeable amount was collected by the miners of the Donets and Kuznetsk coalfields.¹ The Soviet trade unions also collected 500,000 poods (8,000 tonnes) of grain and sent it to the proletariat of the Ruhr.² The first consignment reached Germany on March 29, 1923 on the s.s. *Rus*. A mass meeting was held in Hamburg in that connection on April 5 at which Ernst Thälmann spoke in the name of the Communist Party and the proletariat of Germany and expressed sincere thanks to the working people of the USSR for their fraternal solidarity. A member of the Soviet trade union delegation who had arrived to hand over the grain wrote that Soviet rye had proved to be "living propaganda that cannot be equalled by thousands of revolutionary appeals and resolutions".³

The German proletariat highly appreciated the help of the working class of the USSR. The Central Council of Germany Factory Committees wrote: "We send you our warmest thanks in the name of the revolutionary proletariat of Germany.... You, yourselves suffering from famine and deprivations as a result of world capital's economic blockade, and threatened by the butchers of imperialism, are sharing the little that you have with the starving masses of Germany. World history has not known such an example of amazing, fraternal aid.... It is giving us new strength and new resolve."⁴

The Soviet working class gave the proletariat of Germany particularly effective help when its position became extremely hard in the autumn of 1923 because of the disorganisation of the economy and dire inflation, and hunger developed. The Executive Bureau of the RILU and the ECCI called on all revolutionary trade unions and parties to help the German workers; and the IWR set up an international relief committee. A special international conference

¹ *Trud—for the Ruhr Children*, a special issue of *Trud* on March 25, 1923.

² *Trud*, March 4, 1923.

³ B.G. Kozelev, *The Occupation of the Ruhr and Russian Trade Unions*, Moscow, 1923, p. 4 (in Russian).

⁴ *Pravda*, March 14, 1923.

was held in Berlin.¹ "Bread for German Workers" collections were made in the Soviet Union. The Moscow Soviet called on the working people of Russia "to start collecting donations".² In the Ukraine there was an All-Ukraine Commission for Helping German Workers. Altogether 13,000 tonnes of grain and other food were collected, and 542,500 gold marks were donated to the fund to help the working class of Germany, which was a quarter of the amount sent from abroad.³

In the autumn of 1923 the working class of the USSR also took part in actions of solidarity with the working people of Japan suffering from the aftermath of the destructive earthquake that deprived more than two million workers and peasants of their homes and means of livelihood. In those days *Pravda* wrote: "We have never considered the Japanese people enemies, even when the Russian and Japanese armies, thrown against each other by the Russian and Japanese militarist cliques, were fighting on the fields of Manchuria in 1904-1905. We have always been able to differentiate the dirty, cruel business of the class sharks from the people. And we have always considered the Japanese people ... friends and brothers of the working people of both Russia and the USSR."⁴ A big consignment of timber was shipped to Japan. More than 125,000 roubles were distributed to the victims through the Soviet representative in Japan, and 115,000 through International Workers' Relief, which was running an international campaign of solidarity with the Japanese workers in those days. A veteran seaman, E. D. Bessmertny, who arrived in Japan in those days with a cargo of timber, recalled 50 years later that "the Japanese we met then were deeply moved: a country that itself had just suffered a cruel war, was stretching out a helping hand to them".⁵

The working people of the Soviet Union were soon making angry protests at numerous meetings against the savage repression of those who had taken part in the September uprising in Bulgaria. A meeting of the Sormovo organisation of the RCP(B) and of the Party branch of the Red Weavers mill in Yaroslavl Province resolved to donate part of their pay for the families of Bulgarian workers and Communists. Workers of Moscow and Petrograd elected Georgi Dimitrov, Dimitr Blagoev and Wassily Kolaroff honorary deputies of their city Soviets in October and November 1923 as a sign of solidarity with the Bulgarian revolutionaries. In three months Soviet working people collected around \$ 30,000 for the fund to aid

¹ W. Münzenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-68.

² *Rabochaya Moskva*, August 29, 1923.

³ *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, 1964, No. 5, p. 929.

⁴ *Pravda*, September 5, 1923; W. Münzenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-44.

⁵ *Pravda*, November 13, 1973.

the Bulgarian revolutionary movement. In addition, \$ 5,000 was sent in as a lump-sum grant.¹

The Society of Old Bolsheviks, whose spokesman was Feliks Kon, moved the foundation at the Fourth Congress of the Comintern of an International Red Aid. The organisation, founded in 1922, took it on to give legal and material help to the victims of white terror, fighters against fascism and war and to their families. Its work, as it developed in the following years, contributed much to strengthening international solidarity of the working people. In the period between March 1923 and January 1924 alone the Central Committee of Red Aid sent nearly \$ 96,000, and 3,000 francs worth of financial help to political prisoners, nearly two-thirds of it going to Germany and Bulgaria.² In 1923 more than 3,700 political emigrants found political asylum in the USSR,³ where they were given accommodation, work and medical treatment. One of the main functions of Red Aid was to give assistance to political prisoners in capitalist countries. At the end of 1923, 82 Red Aid organisations of the USSR were aiding prisoners in more than 30 gaols, corresponding with them, sending them gift parcels and sustaining their morale.⁴

* * *

The establishing and development of international proletarian solidarity had as its natural centre the first workers' and peasants' state in the world, which had become the forepost of the world socialist revolution. As Lenin wrote: "World political developments are of necessity concentrated on a single focus—the struggle of the world bourgeoisie against the Soviet Russian Republic." The Soviet Republic quite naturally grouped around it, on the one hand, all the movements of the advanced workers of capitalist countries, and on the other hand all the national liberation movements of the colonies and oppressed nationalities. "Complete victory over capitalism cannot be won unless the proletariat and, following it, the mass of working people in all countries and nations throughout the world voluntarily strive for alliance and unity."⁵

The Fourth Congress of the Comintern, summing up the results of the five years' existence of Soviet Russia, noted: "The first work-

¹ *Slavyane*, 1958, No. 9, p. 20 (in Russian).

² *Izvestia*, February 2, 1924.

³ A.I. Avrus, *Red Aid in the Fight against Terror and Fascism, 1922-1939*, Saratov, 1976, p. 121 (in Russian).

⁴ *MOPR*, 1924, No. 1, p. 30 (in Russian).

⁵ V.I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 146, 151.

ers' State of the world ... has ... regardless of all difficulties and perils definitely demonstrated its strong will and great power to live and develop." And it reminded the workers of all countries that the very existence of the Soviet Republic and all its activities were the most crushing, irreparable blow to world capitalism. It was of invaluable help to the oppressed and exploited of the whole world in their struggle for emancipation from the chains of slavery. "The Russian proletarians have done more than their duty as the revolutionary pioneers of the world proletariat. The world proletariat must at last do its share."¹

The solid foundation of international proletarian solidarity is community of the main aim. As B. N. Ponomarev said on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Comintern: "International solidarity is the birthright of the whole Communist movement; every Party has profited by it in the past, is profiting by it today, and may avail itself of it in the future. As for the CPSU, we have never understood this in a one-sided way, as something useful only for our Party. All Communists, always, need international solidarity. Its tried and tested force is that it rallies Communists for resolute, timely support of those who specially need it at any given moment."²

¹ *Resolutions and Theses of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, Held in Moscow, Nov. 7 to Dec. 3, 1922*, London, 1922, pp. 20, 22.

² B.N. Ponomarev, "On the 60th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist International", *The Revolutionary Legacy of the Communist International. Scientific Conference, Moscow, March 16, 1979*, Moscow, 1980, pp. 18-19 (in Russian).

Chapter 12 (Conclusion)

THE INTERNATIONAL ROLE OF LENINISM

Not long before the outbreak of World War I Lenin wrote an article about the three periods in the history of international Social-Democracy. The first period was that of the birth of socialist ideas and the proletariat's class struggle. The second was the period of the founding, growth, and maturing of mass socialist parties of a class, proletarian composition, and the spread of socialism. But, Lenin continued, "in recent years a third period has been making its appearance, a period in which the forces that have been prepared will achieve their goal in a series of crises".¹ That period in fact soon set in, and it was destined to become the beginning of an epoch of radical transformation of human society.

LENIN AND THE WORLD REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

The end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th were not only marked by the transition from pre-monopoly capitalism to imperialism but were also the beginning of an epoch of revolutionary storms and social upheavals in which the proletariat had the decisive role. It was also the time of the formation of Leninism, called into being by the whole course of the Russian and international working-class movement. In conditions of the increasing attacks on the revolutionary theory of Marx and Engels by revisionism and reformism, it was a paramount task to defend its principles.

It was characteristic of Leninism from its inception that it was not restricted to repulsing the ideological enemy by refuting untrue and pernicious views, but constantly linked that with analysis of new phenomena and processes and further development of the theory, including, when necessary, bold new ideological practical political and organisational conclusions. Lenin's theoretical work broadly

¹ V. I. Lenin, "August Bebel", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 296.

embraced all the components of Marxism (philosophy, political economy, and scientific communism), making a significant contribution to each of them.

As the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU on the 110th anniversary of Lenin's birth said: "Lenin's theory of imperialism, of the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the party, of the proletariat's class allies in the fight for democracy and socialism, of the indissoluble link between social and national liberation, and of the principles of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems has become a priceless ideological, theoretical, and methodological weapon of the revolutionaries of all countries. His ideas on defence of the socialist Fatherland are of immense importance. The pinnacle of his theoretical work was the science of the roads of building socialism and communism that he founded."¹

Lenin showed that imperialism was the last stage of capitalism, parasitic and decaying, and therefore reactionary and aggressive, plunging nations into the depths of world war. His description of the rise of state-monopoly capitalism is still, in our day, the methodological foundation of a scientific approach to study of its subsequent development.

Lenin clearly posed the problem of the inevitability of further internationalisation of the means of production and exchange, and growth, on that basis, of the international links and interlocking of both private and state-monopoly capital. He also linked the increasingly international character of all aspects of the class struggle with that objective process, pointing out that "the antagonism between internationally united capital and the international working-class movement" had been brought to the fore.²

From his analysis of imperialism he concluded that the transformation of capitalism of the period of free competition into monopoly capitalism meant a gigantic speeding up of the maturing of the preconditions of socialism, but that not only could not be taken as grounds for rejecting or weakening class struggle but was evidence, on the contrary, of the illusory character of hopes that imperialism would change its social nature through reforms of some sort or partial improvements. It would never, of itself, develop into socialism, so that the working class had to take the revolutionary road and overthrow and break the domination of capital in bitter struggle.

Lenin attached decisive importance to a key problem, viz., that of the roads and forms of the working class's struggle under imper-

¹ *On the 110th Anniversary of Lenin's Birth. Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU*, 13 December 1979, Moscow, 1980, p. 3 (in Russian).

² V.I. Lenin, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 401.

alism, and its carrying through of a socialist revolution. And he made a far-reaching analysis of all the most important aspects of the problem, as follows:

- (a) the relation between the development of capitalism in the stage of imperialism and growth in the numbers and influence of the working class, and between the standard of living of the working class (in the broadest sense of the term) and the evolution of its class, political consciousness;
- (b) the new content of the three main forms of the labour movement's struggle (economic, political, and theoretical), and in particular the growing significance of political and ideological struggle, which is essentially struggle for the masses;
- (c) the strengthening, in the period of mankind's transition from capitalism to socialism, of the role of a party of a new type capable of so uniting Marxism and the labour movement that the latter would systematically develop its readiness, will, and ability to fight practically to overthrow the power of capital, and for socialism;
- (d) the theory and practice of the preparation for and carrying out of a socialist revolution (including problems of the proletariat's alliances and allies, of the relation between the various methods of its struggle, and of the stages in the development of the revolution, regarded as a social process).

Lenin's lifework was above all the founding and consolidation of the Bolshevik Party, i.e., of a party "capable of leading the masses and taking them into battle against tsarism, a party prepared not only to win Russia from the landowners and the bourgeoisie, but also to rule Russia, and ensure the triumph of the proletarian dictatorship. It was to establish such a party that Lenin waged a relentless struggle against the Mensheviks, the Trotskyites and opportunists of every stripe. The new type of party is ... the supreme embodiment of the indissoluble unity of revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice. It is the greatest legacy that Lenin has bequeathed to the world revolutionary movement, to the builders of socialism and communism".¹

Lenin's party created a fruitful amalgam of revolutionary thought and action that enabled the proletariat of Russia to realise its historic mission in October 1917 and accomplish a victorious socialist revolution. Lenin was its inspirer, leader, and organiser. Leninism was the banner, platform, and programme of the revolution. One can say with full justification that *Leninism is Marxism of the 20th century, of the historical epoch when the working class was able to real-*

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972, pp. 255-56.

ise its world historic mission, when it started the socialist restructuring of the life of humankind.

A new period began in Lenin's work after the October Revolution that was quite exceptional in its intensity and fruitfulness. It is hard even to image what exertions of mind and will were required by the events of the first years after the Revolution:

- (i) the socialist revolution made its victorious, triumphant march over the territory of a huge country (one-sixth of the world!);
- (ii) a workers' and peasants' power without precedent was established, the power of Soviets based on the activity of the millions;
- (iii) a country, monstrously devastated by war, was able to mobilise the powerful inner forces of the new system; the workers and peasants were able to defend the gains of the October Revolution against internal enemies and to repel the onslaught of the united forces of the imperialists;
- (iv) practical ways, means, and methods were found to carry out a gradual transition from capitalism to socialism (and, moreover, in very intricate home and international circumstances) and the foundations of socialist construction were laid in all spheres of life (planned management of the economy; socialist industrialisation; a start on switching the village onto a socialist, co-operative basis; and a socialist cultural revolution);
- (v) a start was made in implementing a policy aimed not just at national liberation but at eliminating the actual inequality of the national peripheries of Russia oppressed by tsarism, at raising their economies and cultures, and creating a powerful socialist multinational state;
- (vi) a consistent struggle for peace launched by the Soviet Republic already in the early years fully demonstrated the well-founded historical basis of Lenin's maxim of long, peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems.

Lenin made his contribution to each of these developments, giving all the strength of his mind, heart, and soul.

In the heat of the events, V. V. Vorovsky, one of Lenin's associates and an active participant in the great work, wrote: "... terrible periods of historical turning points give birth to people who, as it were, embody the moment being endured in their soul. These people are the hub and the vehicles of the new, the future, the loftiest that is hewing out its way in struggle and winning its right to exist. Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov-Lenin is such a person in our epoch of the turn from capitalism to socialism."¹

¹ *Recollections of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1979, p. 5 (in Russian).

When showing the deep source of the immense authority Lenin enjoyed as the organiser and inspirer of great victories, Vorovsky pointed out what attention he paid to the collective experience of the people around him: "An ability to concentrate in himself, like the focus of a concave mirror, the experience and knowledge of many, many people, and to convert them in his rich, mental laboratory into general ideas and slogans is also a rare capacity of his."¹

Lenin not only taught the masses but himself also learned from them. Like no one else he knew how to link theoretical thought and the practical tasks of the revolutionary class, and to maintain and develop links with the masses. He was not afraid of openly admitting that the building of a socialist society and state demanded new knowledge that no one had, and that there had to be a constant search for new roads and solutions. "All that we knew," he said in May 1918, "all that the best experts on capitalist society, the greatest minds who foresaw its development, exactly indicated to us was that transformation was historically inevitable and must proceed along a certain main line, that private ownership of the means of production was doomed by history, that it would burst, that the exploiters would inevitably be expropriated... We knew this when we took power for the purpose of proceeding with socialist reorganisation; but we could not know the forms of transformation, or the rate of development of the concrete reorganisation."² Since unexplored paths had to be followed it was necessary to husband experience grain by grain, and to evolve each measure independently, correcting mistakes on the way. Only the broadest initiative of the working masses could help. "Collective experience," Lenin continued, "the experience of millions can alone give us decisive guidance in this respect, precisely because, for our task, for the task of building socialism, the experience of the hundreds and hundreds of thousands of those upper sections which have made history up to now in feudal society and in capitalist society is insufficient."³

He therefore made it the job of the Communist Party, the trade unions, and other organisations of the working people to educate the masses, above all the working class, and to teach them how to take a direct part in administering the state, economic management, and building a new socialist production and distribution. He considered the loftiest, most important, and most limitless and difficult task to be "to teach the people the art of administration, not from books, not from lectures or meetings, but from practical experience so that instead of just the vanguard of the proletariat which has

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

² V. I. Lenin, "Speech at the First Congress of Economic Councils, May 26, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 410.

³ *Ibid.*

been set to command and organise, more and more fresh blood may enter the departments, and this new section may be reinforced by ten others like it".¹

It was, first and foremost, a higher manifestation of the genuine democracy associated with socialism, and which was its inevitable precondition. Development of the working people's initiative in every way was inseparable from Lenin's idea of democratic centralism as the basis of the operation of the socialist system of planned state and economic administration, which called for unswerving observance of the rules and norms of socialist legality and law and order.

Lenin's theoretical perspicacity and generalisation of real experience enabled him to think out thoroughly the problems of the transition period from capitalism to socialism, the period when revolutionary transformations of the whole structure of society are being made. Capitalist private ownership of the basic means of production is replaced by social ownership, the exploiter classes in town and country are eliminated, and with them the antagonisms they generate. It was Lenin who developed the theory and policy of this transition, including the idea of the New Economic Policy (NEP), a policy that counted on laying the foundation of the socialist economy while temporarily tolerating elements of capitalism, with their gradual supersession; the idea of GOELRO and (for the first time in world practice!) long-term planning of the national economy, and the programme of a cultural revolution in the genuine, humanist sense of the term. These ideas of his, and others, were new developments in Marxism.

In developing the theory of Marx and Engels, Lenin disclosed *the inevitability of a revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism*, and the ways and methods of building socialism, investigated the mechanism of how they operated, and so showed the working class the real road to tackling its world historic task. All these discoveries as a whole now constitute the unshakable foundation of Marxism-Leninism, because "there is no Marxism, and cannot be, without the new that Lenin contributed to its development".²

Today's conditions—both in the West and in the East—are dissimilar in many ways to the features of the situation in Russia in the early 20s, when the course for building a new society was first charted. At the same time Lenin's propositions contained fundamental principles of general significance for socialist policy in many spheres of life, which included such a wealth of ideas about the forms and methods of fighting for socialism that they provide a guiding thread for any conditions and any country. Everything else, of

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Report at the Second All-Russia Trade Union Congress, January 20, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 426.

² *On the 110th Anniversary of Lenin's Birth...*, op. cit., p. 4.

course, the concrete techniques and details of the great work of passing to socialism, has to be worked out independently by the revolutionary party of each country.

Lenin's views that socialism, as the first phase of the communist formation, passes through qualitatively different stages (the building of socialism in the main; developed socialist society) are evoking immense interest in our day. And his development of the ideas of Marx and Engels on the paths of the transition from the first phase of the communist formation to the second is of enormous theoretical significance (and now increasingly of direct practical importance).

When evaluating the immense work Lenin did in studying the patterns of development of socialism, we must always remember, Leonid Brezhnev stressed, that "it called for all-penetrating depth of thought, breadth of outlook, and boldness of idea to preserve clarity of orientation in a Russia disrupted and ploughed up by war and revolution, in the labyrinthine entanglement of socio-economic tendencies, political forces, and contradictory views and moods, and to find and present in a theoretically faultless form the main, principal lines of advance towards socialism".¹

People who were not supporters of Marxism have, as we know, spoken many times of the role of Lenin's personality and contribution to history—Romain Rolland, Anatole France, Thomas Mann, and H. G. Wells, to name but a few.

George Bernard Shaw, for example, wrote in 1931: "You must not think that Lenin belongs to the past because he is now dead. Lenin's significance is such that should his attempt to introduce Socialism fail, then our present civilisation will go under. We know from history that many civilisations have existed before our own, and that, after having reached a certain point in their development, which the present Western capitalist civilisation has already reached, they declined and decayed. On more than one occasion the best representatives of the human race tried to get round this stumbling block, but they were always unsuccessful. Lenin used a new method and he succeeded in avoiding this stumbling block. If others follow Lenin's methods, then a new era will open for us. We shall no longer be constantly threatened by catastrophe; a new epoch will begin which we can hardly imagine."²

Now we already have a clear, distinct idea of this new period of history opened by the October Revolution. And it is no accident that ever more considerable masses of the people of labour are trying to take the road indicated by Lenin, the road of socialism. The fact is that "*the course of history, the far-reaching transformations, and the*

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, op. cit., p. 266.

² Cited from *International Literature*, Moscow, No. 1, 1939, p. 72.

radically altered look of the modern world are providing more and more new evidence of the truth and invincible force of Lenin's ideas".¹

The history of the 20th century is developing according to Lenin; that is the conclusion that real revolutionaries draw when they consider the actual course of events over the past eight decades. Bourgeois opponents of Communism, of course, try to misinterpret that conclusion so as to present Marxists-Leninists as bent on unlimited determinism, i.e., fatal inevitability, a mechanical predestination of the whole course of events. In posing it that way, they say that Marxism-Leninism abandons its own dialectical approach to social processes. Opportunists, who in many ways share these ideas of bourgeois ideologists, eagerly accuse Leninists of dogmatism and of trying to force all events into the Procrustean bed of the preset schema.

All that, however, has no resemblance to actual reality. Leninism has never been and will not become a compendium of prophecies and recipes, suitable for all eventualities. Marxism-Leninism is a living, developing theory. Its merit is that it teaches how to make a thorough, creative analysis of concrete reality, to develop a flexible policy that makes allowance for all the new facts and phenomena arising, while preserving the firmness of revolutionary class principles. Marx, Lenin, and their followers were able, from a profound scientific treatment, not only to analyse contemporaneous reality but also to forecast future development. In the years since both have been confirmed by the experience of history.

When we say that history is now developing along Lenin's lines that is not a groundless statement. Let us recall the main facts:

- (1) Lenin drew the conclusion that *imperialism is the highest and last stage of capitalism, when its whole system is ripe for revolution and socialism*, and that there is no "organised capitalism" at all that can be converted into its opposite, as reformists claim. The decades that have passed have convincingly demonstrated that imperialism has nowhere been transformed into socialism, but on the contrary has remained its mortal enemy. On the other hand, socialist revolutions, and national-democratic revolutions that are developing toward socialism have triumphed over a sizable part of the globe.
- (2) Lenin formulated a thesis that *it is possible in the epoch of imperialism to carry out a victorious socialist revolution initially in one country taken separately* (despite the claims of opportunists who tried, citing conclusions of Marx and Engels about another historical epoch, to affirm that the revolution could only win out simultaneously in the chief capitalist countries).

¹ *On the 110th Anniversary of Lenin's Birth... op. cit., p. 5.*

The first socialist revolution in fact occurred originally in one country. Subsequently socialism was also built in it, and now communism, too, is being successfully built there.

- (3) Lenin came to the conclusion that development would proceed along a path of a successive falling away of more and more countries from capitalism, and their rallying together with the first land of socialism in a single socialist system capable of exerting a decisive influence on world politics. He thereby substantiated the thesis of a diversity of roads to the socialist revolution and its realisation in accordance with the concrete, historical conditions. The people's democratic revolutions in European and Asian countries, and the revolution in Cuba have shown how rich and original the forms and methods of building socialism can be. The forecast of the forming of a world socialist community has also been confirmed. In our day the countries that formed the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance three decades ago are the most dynamic economic complex in the world. The countries of the Warsaw Treaty (whose 25th anniversary was marked in May 1980) have achieved military parity with imperialism on the basis of their economic, scientific, and technological advances. The socialist community has firmly taken the initiative in international affairs, posing the most important problems bothering people.
- (4) It took the imperialists a long time to recognise Lenin's conclusion about *the necessity for, and possibility of, peaceful coexistence of states belonging to the two opposing social systems*. But some of them, still, in our time, try to contest the stability of peaceful coexistence with socialism. The Final Act of the Helsinki Conference, however, and the bilateral treaties signed by the USSR with many capitalist countries, are not only actual recognition of the correctness of Lenin's thesis by a substantial part of bourgeois ruling circles but are also formal recognition of it.
- (5) In developing the conclusions of Marx and Engels on the roads of development of colonial countries, Lenin came to the conclusion that *the revolutionary potential of the peoples of colonial and dependent countries was growing rapidly*, that those countries could play a much greater role in humanity's development along the road to socialism than could be thought before, and that, in particular, *a non-capitalist road of development was actually possible for a number of colonial nations*. That has now been convincingly demonstrated by the rise of a number of countries that have chosen a socialist-oriented revolutionary-democratic road. The road is not easy, and it could not be a simple one, but Lenin's conclusion has enabled tens of

millions of people to speed up their advance, seeking and finding a new historical route of social progress.

Since *the most important scientific forecasts developed by the founders of Marxism-Leninism have been confirmed by the course of history*, the truth of Marxism-Leninism has been demonstrated in the most convincing way. This theory is not a utopian one, an abstract construction, or a noble wish but, as its founders themselves said, expresses, "in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes".¹

Mankind now knows not just one victorious socialist revolution, but many, in several countries. It has also seen revolutions that could have led to victory of the working class but which for one reason or another—objective and subjective—failed. Revolutions are known that began as national liberation, democratic ones and then developed into socialist ones. The world revolutionary process, as Lenin foresaw, is developing in an intricate, indirect way, and not along four-square lines. The bourgeoisie, he wrote in 1922, "is still in a position to condemn millions and tens of millions to torment and death through its whiteguard and imperialist wars... The bourgeoisie is still able freely to torment, torture and kill. But it cannot halt the inevitable and—from the standpoint of world history—not far distant triumph of the revolutionary proletariat."²

Communists are a party of historical optimists. And their optimism is revolutionary, based not on hope and faith but on scientific penetration into the laws of social progress. These laws were discovered and developed by the founders of Marxism-Leninism. Their further development in new conditions is the duty of their disciples and followers.

SOCIAL CONTRADICTIONS IN THE EPOCH SINCE OCTOBER 1917

When we glance at the road followed by humanity it is easy to see the turning points in society's transition to a new qualitative state. One of them, the deepest, moreover, in history, was the social upheaval made by the Great October Revolution, the substance of which has been reviewed in this volume. "The abolition of capitalism and its vestiges," Lenin said, "and the establishment of the fundamentals of the communist order comprise the content of the new era of world history that has set in."³

¹ K. Marx and F. Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party". In Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 498.

² V. I. Lenin, "On the Tenth Anniversary of *Pravda*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 352.

³ V. I. Lenin, "On the Struggle Within the Italian Socialist Party", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 392.

(1) The turn in history begun in October 1917 made it possible first and foremost to tackle such problems of social development as the provision of social and national equality, and the elimination of hunger, poverty, illiteracy, etc. which had long been put on the agenda by life itself, but which capitalism, the exploiter system, prevented from being solved.

(2) The turn made it possible to make a start on successful solution of the quite new problems that arose through liquidation of the exploiter system and from the substance of the new socialist society, i.e., problems such as no one had anywhere or ever tackled before. Lenin graphically described the novelty of these tasks, saying that when the people of Russia began the revolution they had neither the roads nor the buggies by which they could travel. But the road was discovered, cleared, and built, and the powerful locomotive of socialism has been driving confidently along it now for more than six decades.

(3) The turn in history gave impetus to the thinking out of the new problems that have been thrown up by world development, problems that are truly global and universal, on whose solution the fate of civilisation as a whole depends. It is typical that it was not capitalism, with its centuries of experience, but young socialism and its revolutionary daring that first began, in fact, actually to tackle the tasks of raising previously backward nations in an all-round way to the level of the advanced ones, and became the initiator of the fight to eradicate aggressive wars and for universal peace, and planned economic exploitation of natural wealth and resources, so as to avoid their rapacious destruction.¹

The incontestable fact that the October Revolution opened *a new stage in the development of the international labour movement* is shown above all in the appearance of a working class of a new type on the arena of world history, the working class of socialist society. It had still only begun its historic road in 1917-23, and many of its features as a socialist class were only being moulded. But its profound qualitative difference from the proletariat of capitalist society had already been determined; it had become, together with the other working people, the owner and master of the means of production, had begun to receive its share of the national income, on the basis of the principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work", and had been turned into the fully equal superintendent of each enterprise and industry, and of the economy and policy of the whole country. It had not only, moreover, retained all the creative, constructive features inherent in the international

¹ For further details see V. Zagladin and I. Frolov, "Global Problems and Humankind's Future", *Kommunist*, No. 7, 1979, pp. 92-105.

proletariat, but had also augmented them substantially. Becoming more and more linked with the most progressive production, while remaining a principled opponent of every kind of exploitation, it became an influential vector of ideas of the emancipation of the human race, freedom, democracy, and socialism.

In his time Lenin spoke of the need to create conditions such that "the habits, usages and convictions acquired by the working class in the course of many decades of struggle for political liberty—the sum total of these habits, usages and ideas should serve as an instrument for the education of all working people".¹ This idea was carried out in the Soviet country. In the very first, difficult years, as we have shown, the vanguard of the Soviet working class had already displayed unprecedented mass heroism and revolutionary self-sacrifice in battle and in work.

In the rest of the world the upsurge in the years after the October Revolution of 1917 made substantial changes both in the position of the working class and in the content of its liberation struggle. The proletarian vanguard, in spite of the heroism displayed, suffered several defeats and experienced bitter disappointments; nowhere, except in Soviet Russia, did it succeed in breaking the capitalists' domination. The omnipotence of the imperialists, however, had come to an end; the whole capitalist system had been shaken and had entered a period of lingering, incurable *general crisis*.

The workers of the developed capitalist countries succeeded in winning certain major or minor gains during the revolutionary battles. The overthrow of the reactionary Hohenzollern and Hapsburg monarchies in the centre of Europe, and the rise of republics in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, and of a number of independent states, were definite progress. A universal franchise had been introduced (or extended) in almost all European countries, and democratic rights and freedoms proclaimed. That, of course, did not mean that the ruling bourgeois circles and military-reactionary organisations backing them in Germany or Hungary, Bulgaria, Italy, or Poland, had ceased shedding the workers' blood or rejected terroristic suppression of their actions. The degree of political freedom achieved depended both on the proletariat's strength and degree of organisation and the acuteness of the class confrontation in the country.

The bourgeoisie was forced, by the pressure of the proletariat's revolutionary struggle, to recognise the rights of workers organised in trade unions (which had become a significant force) to certain minimum social living and working conditions, in order to retain

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at an All-Russia Conference of Political Education Workers of Gubernia and Uyezd Education Departments, November 3, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 365-66.

its supremacy. In several European countries the eight-hour day had been established by legislation (recommended in 1919 by the International Labour Conference). The workers had managed, by stubborn strike struggle, to get recognition of the right of trade unions to conclude collective agreements on levels of pay and working conditions. In several countries a system of social security had been introduced, including payment of unemployment benefits, pensions, and compensations.

While agreeing under pressure to these concessions, the employers tried to take them back again at the first opportunity, especially during economic crises. The workers' gains were therefore unstable, and not only did not lessen the tension of the class battles but even gave them a new sharpness. The revolutionary vanguard strove to consolidate the partial and temporary advances achieved and to take the struggle further. They put forward demands for the nationalisation of big enterprises, mines, and whole sectors of industry and transport, the establishment of workers' control over production, a change in tax policy, and tackling of the housing problem. More and more often they demanded the ending of restrictions on political liberties, and the banning and disarming of reactionary and fascist formations, took action in support of the peasants' agrarian demands, and so on.

The working class responded to political events both in its own country and on the international arena with mounting energy. The mass manifestations of the proletariat's international solidarity have thoroughly been considered here. They were expressed, above all, in a powerful "Hands Off Russia" movement that swept the whole world, and also in organised help for the starving of the Volga area, in support for the German workers in connection with the occupation of the Ruhr, in actions in defence of the victims of repression in Hungary, Bulgaria, and Germany, in aid for the victims of the earthquake in Japan, etc. Never before had the proletariat's international activity attained such a scale.

There were substantial changes in the political organisation of the working class in the years after the October Revolution. In most countries independent communist parties arose as a result of the sharp demarcation between revolutionaries and reformists. To some extent this repeated what had happened earlier in Russia: revolutionary Marxism, now enriched by Leninism, was united in the new stage with the labour movement, and parties of a new type began to be formed. This was a manifestation of the internal requirements of the labour movement; communist parties were not "planted from Moscow" in a single country in the West or the East. But it was quite natural that the revolutionary vanguard strove to study the experience of the party that had already achieved

a historic victory, and to transfer what could be drawn from it to the conditions in their own countries.¹

The uniting of the young Communist Parties in the Communist International was dictated by the obvious necessity "of accumulating the experience of the international labour movement in the new stage of its development, qualitatively enriched by the October Revolution in Russia and the revolutionary upsurge in other countries. It was a matter of defending the interests of the working people, saving socialism, rescuing internationalism from jingoism and social-chauvinism, reviving in the new conditions of the best traditions of the international proletarian organisations associated with the names of Marx and Engels, the founders of scientific communism".²

The birth of the modern communist movement put an end almost everywhere to the undivided sway of Social-Democracy in the labour movement. Reformism and class collaboration, which were able—at best—to win partial and temporary successes, were now opposed by a revolutionary strategy and tactics aimed at a radical transformation of society and the state, and at humanity's advance to socialism and communism.

In the early years—due both to the objective situation and subjective circumstances—the communist movement was oriented on direct storming of the citadels of capitalism. The socialist revolution was considered the immediate task of the day. A demand for the dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet power was put forward as a counterpoise to bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism. But in 1920, and especially in 1921, it had become clear that the situation in the world had altered and that a new political orientation was necessary.

Under Lenin's guidance the Communist movement charted the transition from assault to a more or less long-drawn-out siege. Communists, he considered, had first of all, in the existing circumstances, to tackle the difficult task of winning the majority of the working class, working masses over to their side. It was a vital premise for success for revolutionaries to overcome the widespread "infantile disorder of Leftism", which threatened them with self-isolation and sectarianism. He doggedly taught Communists that the strategy and tactics of a revolutionary party in the class struggle called for uniting of a strictly scientific analysis of the situation

¹ For further details see Vadim Zagladin, "The October Revolution and the Rise of Communist Parties". In *Communists and Social Progress*, Moscow, 1978, pp. 59-103 (in Russian).

² B. N. Ponomarev, "On the 60th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist International". In *The Revolutionary Legacy of the Communist International. The Scientific Conference on the 60th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist International. Moscow, 16 March, 1979*, Moscow, 1980, pp. 4-5 (in Russian).

and the high art of political leadership. He advised them to work persistently in all mass organisations, to use all forms and means of struggle, to employ flexible tactics, not to be afraid of compromises, and to enter boldly into political alliances.

Lenin and the Comintern worked out the fundamentals then of Communist strategy, tactics, and organisation from a generalisation of collective experience. The strategic line, aimed at systematic, thorough preparation for coming revolutionary battles, envisaged consolidation of the militant party of the working class as the advanced, conscious vanguard and leader of the masses. Much attention was paid, when developing Lenin's idea of the hegemony of the proletariat, to the problem of allies, above all to the ways and methods of drawing broad strata of the working peasantry, and also of the urban middle strata and intellectuals, into the struggle.

Workers, and other working people of countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa took part in the general revolutionary upsurge of the period after the October Revolution. Lenin and the Comintern defined the place of the national liberation movements of the oppressed nations of colonial and dependent countries in the developing anti-imperialist struggle, and advised the Communist organisations just being formed to join in actively in the national revolutionary struggle, allowing for the diversity of the socio-economic and political conditions of their regions and countries.

In the situation created by the offensive of capital and the danger of fascism, the Communists of European countries, overcoming doubts in their own ranks, put forward *the tactic of a united workers' front*, and later, the idea of a worker and worker-peasant government. The Communist Parties and the Comintern worked out programmes of united action of the various contingents, trends, and organisations of the working class, negotiated with Social-Democratic leaders at national and international level on joint struggle for the workers' partial demands and against reaction and fascism. The idea of an anti-imperialist front in the colonies and dependent countries also promoted unity of the progressive elements, and a uniting of all the three main forces of the revolutionary movement, viz., Soviet Russia, the proletarians of capitalist countries, and the oppressed peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies, in a common struggle.

These political ideas of the joint action of the Communist and Social-Democratic trends in the labour movement, and the rallying of forces of a different social and political level in the anti-imperialist struggle, which were new in principle for the time, were the fruit of the collective initiative of Communists under the leadership of Lenin, and with his direct involvement. Although only the foundations of their realisation were laid in his lifetime, and unity was

only achieved to a small extent because of the opposition of the right-wing leaders of the Social-Democrats, these ideas and the experience accumulated underlie "the contemporary strategy of the Communist movement aimed at development of the dialogue and co-operation of the various streams of the labour, democratic movement, and the formation of anti-monopoly, anti-war and anti-imperialist alliances".¹

In the epoch opened by the October Revolution the immanent link between social contradictions and the development of the revolutionary process, long known to Marxists but hidden from the broad masses by the efforts of social-reformists, began to have its effect, which has become all the clearer the further we are from 1917. The mechanism of the action of the main contradictions on the scale and depth of the movements of the popular masses, above all on the proletariat's class struggle and also on the whole development of the social system, has only recently engaged the attention of Marxist writers. That is due to the fact that this problem has only "matured" and acquired special significance in recent years. It undoubtedly deserves further development, since it helps us grasp the deep reasons for the inevitable future growth of revolutionary trends.

The social contradiction *labour vs. capital* played the leading role in the revolutionary process before the October Revolution. It was the main stimulus of the proletariat's class struggle (and is still so now, in the capitalist world). In the post-October world the system of social contradictions determining the development of society underwent radical changes. The first and main one was that a new contradiction of social development arose in the world after 1917 owing to the splitting of the world into two mutually opposed social systems, a contradiction that Lenin described as a "duel between two methods, two political and economic systems—the communist and the capitalist".² The development of the *socialism vs. capitalism* contradiction was a result of the development of the contradiction between labour and capital, and was its highest expression, as it were, on a world scale. But while it continued the line of the old labour vs. capital contradiction in essence, it at the same time acquired its own special qualitative characteristics.

This contradiction develops (1) between emancipated labour, the free working class of the socialist countries, who have thrown off the yoke of capital, and the bourgeoisie of all countries, who have come forward as its sworn, rabid enemy; (2) in the main outside

¹ B. N. Ponomarev, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

² V. I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Activists of the Moscow Organisation of the R.C.P.(B.), December 6, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 456.

the capitalist world (although the struggle of socialist and bourgeois ideologies takes various forms in the capitalist countries themselves); (3) the socialism vs. capitalism contradiction interacts with the main internal social contradiction of the bourgeois world, viz. labour vs. capital.

It is clear, therefore, that the socialism vs. capitalism and labour vs. capital contradictions are different; their identification, sometimes made in bourgeois literature, is theoretically unsound and politically harmful, because it leads to underestimation of the proper significance of the struggle of the working class of capitalist countries. At the same time it is no less mistaken and harmful to deny the relationship and continuity between these two contradictions that is sometimes preached now by both "left" and right-wing theorists. Such a denial can lead to a counterposing of two of the most important streams in the revolutionary process, and to excusing a policy aimed at breaking up the labour and communist movement.

The contradiction between the two systems is thus no longer an internal contradiction of the capitalist mode of production. Being external both to capitalism and socialism, it became the *main* contradiction of world development immediately after the October Revolution, ultimately determining its whole course. Even then (as we have shown from many facts relating to the various regions), this contradiction became decisive from the standpoint of the outlook for mankind's development. But the real influence of socialism on the course of international events was then still limited.

The transformation of socialism into a world system, and its growth and consolidation, the development of national liberation revolutions and the labour movement have created a new situation. The degree of influence of the socialism vs. capitalism contradiction on events has steadily grown, and in our day it has become the leading, determinant one not only by its trend but also in fact, because it is based on a new balance of forces on a world scale. At the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in 1960 those taking part had already noted that "*the world socialist system is becoming the decisive factor in the development of society*".¹ The 1969 Meeting said in its Document: "The events of the past decade bear out that the Marxist-Leninist assessment of the character, content, and chief trends of the present epoch is correct... *The world socialist system is the decisive force in the anti-imperialist struggle*."²

Today the struggle between socialism and capitalism in the eco-

¹ *The Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Socialism*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1963, p. 38.

² *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow, 1969*, Peace and Socialism Publishers, Prague, 1969, pp. 12, 21.

conomic, political, and ideological fields is the leading front on which problems affecting the fate of the whole humankind, are being decided. All other social contradictions that underlie the revolutionary process are developing under its direct influence. That applies above all to the labour vs. capital contradiction. Substantial essential changes have taken place in the functioning of both its elements—capital and labour—which has led to further growth of its explosive force.

Let us look first at the regressive side of this contradiction, namely capital. Marx had already remarked that the laws of development of capitalism could be modified by various circumstances; the proletariat's class struggle, for example, affects operation of the law of capitalist accumulation.¹ The Great October Revolution, and later the forming of the world system of socialism, generated more and more circumstances affecting capitalism with immense, increasing force, and accelerating and deepening the operation of the inner laws of its development that are undermining its foundations.

In the early stages of the coexistence and struggle of the two systems the impact of socialism on "capital" was mainly manifested in the political sphere. The bourgeoisie, Lenin wrote then, were "terrified of 'Bolshevism', exasperated by it almost to the point of frenzy ... rave, work [themselves] into a frenzy, go to extremes, commit follies".² On the other hand, as time went on, they were forced to take more account of actually existing socialism; they could not help seeing that the social advances of Soviet Russia were strengthening the attack of the working class of capitalist countries and making it necessary to grant concessions like the eight-hour working day and social legislation to which they had previously not agreed.

As socialism strengthened, and as the balance of power in the world altered in its favour, its influence, both in scope and depth, on capital increased, and in our time has become comprehensive. The direction of the modification of this effect was brought out at the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in 1969, and analysis of it was continued at the congresses of the CPSU and other communist parties.

Summing up the changes that have taken place in capital since the October Revolution, we can say that they amount to *a further deepening of its antagonisms and a maturing of the objective, material preconditions of the socialist revolution*, and to a progressing weakening of its position in its fight against labour.

¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 603.

² V. I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *op. cit.*, pp. 100, 101.

The October Revolution and subsequent development of world socialism have had an even greater effect on the second, revolutionary side of the contradiction, i.e., on labour. The development of the working class and labour movement is determined by a triad of laws: (1) the development of capitalism as a system, of which the working class is a part; (2) the movement of the working class itself as the antagonist of capital and its supremacy; (3) the influence of socialism and the revolutionary process as a whole on the position and struggle of the proletariat of capitalist countries. These laws can only be separated, incidentally, through investigation; in actuality they are dialectically interacting, interwoven, and blended.

The rise of the Russian working class to a new level of development, and the beginning of its transformation into a new socialist class, could not help affecting the position of the whole world proletariat. It can be clearly seen today that the extension and consolidation of the socialist system, plus the advances of the labour and national liberation movements, are more and more extending the opportunities of the working class of capitalist countries in its attack on the positions of imperialism. The power of socialism is thus increasing the probability of realisation of the socialist revolution in a peaceful way, without civil war, and making it possible to speed up the transition from capitalism to socialism.

In the period of imperialism there has been a noticeable extension of the social basis of the revolutionary process; non-proletarian working strata, including the peasantry, are being drawn into the struggle in capitalist countries, and ever broader masses of the oppressed people on the periphery. When Lenin was analysing the development of the system of contradictions of imperialist society, he came to the very important conclusion that at this stage of the maturity of capitalism a new, broader social contradiction arose, in addition to the main labour vs. capital social contradiction, between the monopolies and financial oligarchy, on the one hand, and the majority of the nation (including in that the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie, white-collar workers and the intelligentsia, and even part of the middle, non-monopolist bourgeoisie), on the other.

Though contradictions on one and the same plane they nevertheless differed substantially from one another. The labour vs. capital contradiction stems from the very essence of capitalist private property and the capitalist mode of production; its solution presupposes liquidation of the capitalist system as such. The *monopolies vs. people* contradiction arose only in the imperialist stage of the development of capitalism. It reflects a further deepening of the antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie at a stage marked by unprecedented growth of exploitation of labour by the imperialist

oligarchy, which had got hold of a decisive part of the means of production. It grew from the essence of monopolistic property counterposing itself as a concentrated force to all the other forms of private property and threatening to engulf them. In the period of imperialism, Lenin stressed, "the old struggle between small and big capital is being resumed at a new and immeasurably higher stage of development".¹

In the political sphere the monopolies vs. people contradiction finds its embodiment in the antagonism between the masses, striving for democracy (even with its bourgeois limitations), and the ruling circles of capitalist countries, which are formed from the direct and indirect creatures of monopoly capital, and are trying to cut back the democratic gains of the working people and even to eliminate democracy in general.

Solution of the monopolies vs. people contradiction subsumes, as a minimum, eradication of the omnipotence of the financial oligarchy, and of the dominating influence of a handful of trusts, i.e., of millionaires and billionaires, in the economy and politics of a country, and curbing of the multinational monopolies. Such a shift, while not abolishing capitalism, could limit the aggressiveness of the most reactionary and bellicose circles on home and foreign policy to some extent.

The rise and development of a contradiction between the monopolies and all the people, in addition to the contradiction between labour and capital, have caused a serious change in the balance of social forces in capitalist countries, and the growth of the role of class alliances. The October Revolution distinctly showed the following: the working class's alliance with the peasantry swept away the tsarist regime, hated by the people, while the alliance of the workers and poorest peasants ensured victory of the socialist revolution. Some three decades later, in the countries of Central and South-East Europe, non-proletarian strata of the working people were actively involved, along with the proletariat, in making revolutions there. In the ensuing years the contradictions between the monopolies and all the people have continued to deepen, remained one of the bases for development of the revolutionary process.

After the October Revolution, and under its influence, the struggle of the colonial and dependent nations for their national liberation considerably grew and became increasingly radical and purposive. The contradiction between the metropolitan countries and the colonies and, as an expression of it, of the national liberation movement of nations oppressed by foreign capital, had already developed

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 224.

in preceding stages of the revolutionary process. Marx and Engels had pointed out that national and class oppression within the capitalist formation had a common basis, viz., the supremacy of capital, and that the national liberation struggle of the oppressed nations and the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat were therefore united by a common interest, that of liquidating this domination. The task of proletarian revolutionaries was to ensure a connection and co-operation of these unlike movements that would open up new prospects for both of them.

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Lenin wrote, "Capitalism has grown into a world system of colonial oppression and of the financial strangulation of the overwhelming majority of the population of the world by a handful of 'advanced' countries."¹ That meant that the *metropolitan countries vs. colonies* contradiction had acquired new scope and depth, that the objective conditions had arisen for a coming together of the labour and national liberation movements, and a uniting of their forces in common struggle against imperialist oppression. "The class-conscious European worker," Lenin wrote, "now has comrades in Asia, and their number will grow by leaps and bounds."² In summing up the new phenomena in the revolutionary process Lenin formulated a most important conclusion: "The social revolution can come only in the form of an epoch in which are combined civil war by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in the advanced countries and a *whole series* of democratic and revolutionary movements, including the national liberation movement, in the undeveloped, backward and oppressed nations."³

When investigating the changes in the conditions for the development of the metropolitan countries vs. colonies contradiction in the post-October period, Lenin noted that World War I had encouraged the drawing of the colonial nations into active political life and had sharpened their contradictions with the metropolitan countries. The October Revolution had even greater significance; the struggle of the Russian proletariat merged with a rise of the national liberation struggle of the nations oppressed by tsarism, and the victory of the Revolution ensured the victory of these nations. Summing up, Lenin said: "The imperialist war of 1914-18 and the Soviet power in Russia are completing the process of converting these masses into an active factor in world politics and in the revolutionary destruction o

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

² V. I. Lenin, "Inflammable Material in World Politics", *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 185.

³ V. I. Lenin, "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 60.

imperialism.”¹ The revolutionary events in China, India, Turkey, and other countries of the East in the first years after the October Revolution confirmed this conclusion.

There was a sharp change in the development of the metropolitan countries vs. colonies contradiction. Where the struggle used to be waged in the main between the national bourgeoisie of certain colonial and dependent countries and the monopoly capital of the metropolitan countries, its scope was now extended through the involvement of the broadest masses of the people, including the rising proletariat. The struggle had been deepened as the working people began as well, to put forward their own demands, taking the line not only of national but also of social emancipation. The interaction of the national liberation movements and the struggle of Soviet Russia and the revolutionary proletarian movement in capitalist countries became real. Since imperialist oppression remained “a source for artificially retarding the collapse of capitalism”,² the fight against colonialism was transformed into a component of a single revolutionary process, and opened up prospects of involving the liberated countries in “the general maelstrom of the world revolutionary movement”.³

The relationship of the main social contradictions determining the progressive development of mankind (labour vs. capital, socialism vs. capitalism, monopolies vs. the people, metropolitan countries vs. colonies) has ceased to be just a theoretical, abstract matter. It constitutes the real foundation for a further united struggle of all defenders of peace, democracy, and socialism, whose cooperation is one of the vital features of the Leninist revolutionary epoch.

AT THE CENTRE OF THE BATTLE OF IDEAS

There is not a single problem of recent history that has attracted so much attention throughout the world as the Great October Socialist Revolution. And there is undoubtedly no other politician and statesman in the world who has attracted so much public interest as Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.

From the time when mankind's transition from capitalism to socialism began in fact, i.e., to the social system under which, as Engels put it, man himself began, “with full consciousness” to

¹ V. I. Lenin, “Third Congress of the Communist International, June 22-July 12, 1921. Theses for a Report on the Tactics of the R.C.P.”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 454-55.

² V. I. Lenin, “The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 342.

³ V. I. Lenin, “Better Fewer, but Better”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 499.

"make his own history" and "the social causes set in movement by him have, in the main and in a constantly growing measure, the results intended by him",¹ the role of the subjective factor of social progress has grown colossally. Correspondingly, the battle of ideas between the forces of the old world and the forces of the future, the forces of communism has played an increasing role. These ideological battles have drawn the whole world into their orbit. And they have been centred on Lenin's ideas and the experience of the October Revolution.

Naturally, there is an immense quantity of Party documents and theoretical and historical works written in the Soviet Union and other countries of socialism, and by Marxists-Leninists of the non-socialist world, devoted to the October Revolution and Lenin. All supporters of socialism draw inspiration from Lenin's ideas and the experience of the Great October Revolution.

To take only the documents and books of recent years, we must mention first of all the resolutions of the Central Committee of the CPSU On the 60th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution and On the 110th Anniversary of Lenin's Birth, Leonid Brezhnev's reports on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and The Great October Revolution and Mankind's Progress,² which contain profound scientific generalisations of the historical experience of the CPSU and formulated new ideas that are a noteworthy development and enrichment of Lenin's theoretical legacy. Major problems of principle have been posed in the works of M. A. Suslov,³ and B.N. Ponomarev.⁴

Publication of Lenin's biographical chronicles has been continued,⁵ and new editions of reminiscences of Lenin⁶ and of *The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*⁷ have appeared. There have been a second edition of I. I. Mints's fundamental work on the October Revolution⁸ and three volumes of the series "The

¹ Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, p. 344.

² See L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, pp. 52-116; *idem. Our Course: Peace and Socialism*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1978, pp. 169-87.

³ See M. Suslov, "The Historical Truth of Lenin's Ideas and Cause", *Kommunist*, 1980, No. 4, pp. 11-29.

⁴ B.N. Ponomarev, *The Living, Effective Theory of Marxism-Leninism (An Answer to Critics)*, Moscow, 1978 (in Russian); *idem, On the 60th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Communist International*, *op. cit.*; *idem, The Great Vital Force of Leninism*, Moscow, 1980 (in Russian).

⁵ Vladimir Ilych Lenin. *Biographical Chronicle*, Vols. 4 to 10, Moscow, 1973-1980 (in Russian).

⁶ *Reminiscences of Lenin*, Vols. 1 to 5, Moscow, 1979 (in Russian).

⁷ B.N. Ponomarev et al., *The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Moscow, 1979.

⁸ I.I. Mints, *The History of the Great October*, Vols. 1 to 3, Moscow, 1979 (in Russian).

Ideas of the October Revolution and World Development",¹ and the proceedings of the international scientific conference "The Great October Revolution and the Contemporary epoch. The Triumph of the Leninist Ideas".² The generalised descriptions and assessments of a great number of research works by Soviet historians on Lenin's activity and problems of the history of the October Revolution, including the role of the working class of Russia, have been given in historiographic surveys,³ and collections of source materials have been published.⁴

The creative activity of Marxist-Leninist parties aimed at further development of the scientific theory of the revolutionary labour movement has attained great scope in recent years. The Communists of the socialist countries have made a notable contribution to it, having accumulated a great scientific potential, as did the Communist Parties of capitalist and developing countries. The works by leaders of the fraternal parties, documents of their congresses and Central Committee meetings, the propositions they set forth, are the common property of the Communist movement enriching modern Marxism-Leninism.

Quite a number of works by Marxists have appeared in various countries, devoted to Lenin and the October Revolution, some of which have also been published in the Soviet Union either as separate volumes, or in anthologies, or in series of pamphlets.⁵ Much attention has been paid of late to problems of the general patterns of the socialist revolution and building of socialism. William Kash-

¹ The editorial board of the series includes V. Zagladin, N. Kuzmin, I. Mints, T. Timofeyev, P. Fedoseyev, *Communists and Social Progress*, Moscow, 1978 (in Russian); T.T. Timofeyev, *The Working Class at the Centre of the Ideological and Theoretical Struggle*, Moscow, 1979 (in Russian); *The Working Class and Social Progress*, Moscow, 1980 (in Russian).

² Edited by P. N. Fedoseyev, A. G. Yegorov, M. T. Iovchuk, E. M. Chekharin (in Russian).

³ See, for example, I. I. Mints, "The Great October Revolution, a Turning Point in the History of Mankind (Some Results and Tasks of the Study of the Problem)", *Istoriya SSSR*, 1975, No. 6; *The Party and the Great October Revolution. A Historical Essay*, Moscow, 1976; E. N. Gorodetsky, "Contemporary Soviet Literature on the October Revolution", *Istoriya SSSR*, 1977, No. 6; *idem.* "Recent Soviet Historiography of the October Armed Uprising in Petrograd", *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, 1977, No. 9; *idem.* *New Pages of the October Revolution*, Moscow, 1978; I. I. Mints, V. P. Naumov, "Study of the History of the October Revolution and Civil War", *Study of the National History in the USSR in the Period Between the 24th and 25th CPSU Congresses*. Moscow, 1978 (all in Russian).

⁴ *Study of Original Sources on the History of the Great October Revolution. Collection of Articles*, Moscow, 1977, (in Russian).

⁵ See, for example, Rodney Arismendi, *Lenin, la revolucion y América Latina*, Montevideo, Pueblos unidos, 1970; *The Great Power of the Ideas of the October Revolution*, Moscow, 1967 (in Russian); *The Great Power of Lenin's Ideas*, Moscow, 1970 (in Russian).

tan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Canada, for example, has remarked: "It is not enough simply to acknowledge October 1917 and its significance. One must take guidance in its ideas, carry them forward in present-day conditions and see to it that they should continue to influence modern political and social life."¹

The struggle of the Bolsheviks, led by Lenin, for victory of the socialist revolution remains the focus of interest of Marxist historical thinking. The October Revolution, Le Duan has emphasised, gave revolutionaries the world over "a remarkable model of strategic and tactical conduct" of forms of struggle for power.² The CPSU's concrete experience is studied, as a rule, in close contact with the political practice of the working class of the country concerned. The Hungarian Marxist Dezső Nemes points out, for example, that the formation of the Communist Party in his country "was an expression of the extremely deep influence that the Great October Socialist Revolution had in Hungary".³ Victorio Codovilla, leader of Argentine Communists has said: "Not a single era in the history of mankind, no matter how great its leaders, its ideals and accomplishments, could be compared with that era ushered in by the world's first socialist revolution."⁴

The collective theoretical work of Communists is also being developed on an ever broader scale. More than 100 international theoretical conferences of Marxist parties were held in the 1970s. Many of them, for example the Sofia conference on the role of socialism in world development (1978), have made a notable contribution to the Communists' common cause. Much interesting material is being published in the international theoretical and information journal *World Marxist Review (Problems of Peace and Socialism)*.

All that is quite natural, because Leninism by its very nature is constant creation and constant innovation. Lenin, as we said above, never stopped at creating new ideological and theoretical grounds for political conclusions of one sort or another, in order to move ahead. Some people, referring to that, label him "also a revisionist", but in so doing they forget a fundamental truth, namely that in developing Marxism he never departed from its soil. He revised views and concrete conclusions that did not correspond to the new reality, but not in order to depart from the revolutionary essence

¹ William Kashtan, "The Great October and the Modern World", *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 14, 1971, No. 11, p. 2.

² Le Duan, *Forward under the Glorious Banner of the October Revolution*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi, 1967, p. 7.

³ *The Great October Socialist Revolution and Hungary*, Budapest, 1969, pp. 114-15 (in Hungarian).

⁴ Victorio Codovilla, *Repercusión de la Revolución socialista de Octubre en la Argentina y demás países de América Latina*, Buenos Aires, 1968, p. 91.

of this theory, as revisionists always try to do, but in order to make it more adequate to changing conditions.

"Continuity in Marxist-Leninist theory and politics," B. N. Ponomarev writes, "reflects the objective international unity of the world historical process and the deep interconnection of its various stages. The essence of the theoretical positions of Marxists-Leninists, and the decisive condition for their success in fighting for the cause of the working class, is unshakable unity of two fundamental moments, viz., fidelity to the underlying principles of the scientific revolutionary world outlook and a conscious need for its creative development in accordance with the changes in actual reality."¹

In its development, Marxism-Leninism takes into account and assimilates all the advances of social science and social practice, bases itself on study and generalisation of all the processes of the development of nature and society. It thus differs advantageously from all other theories, doctrines, and trends that limit themselves to covering only one or a few aspects of the life of modern mankind.

Marxism-Leninism, needless to say, will be developed further by all the forces that take their stand on this great theory, by all the fraternal parties that act under its banner. At the same time, one can hardly agree with claims that a contribution is made to Marxism-Leninism in general by all those, even anti-Marxian researchers, who employ the terminology adopted by Marxism or accept some of its theses. The conclusion that the road to the further enrichment of Leninism lies through "extending" its framework, and including the most varied views and propositions in it that are shared by certain contingents of the labour movement, is also extremely dubious.

The works of Soviet and other Marxists have created a broad picture of the initial stage of the establishing of the new system in the USSR and the upsurge of the liberation movements in all corners of the world under the impact of the first victorious socialist revolution. The common conclusion that all researchers affirm is the irreversibility of the historical process, the irresistibility of the social transformation of the world, and the doomed character of all the attempts of imperialism and reaction to erect barriers in its path.

The bourgeois world naturally met the October Revolution and Lenin (it "noticed" him only when he stood at the head of the Soviet Government) with all the hostility and hatred of which it was capable. The time is already long past when the bourgeoisie itself was

¹ B.N. Ponomarev, *The Living, Effective Theory of Marxism-Leninism*, op. cit., pp. 10-11 (in Russian).

revolutionary; the revolutionariness of the proletariat, moreover, has always aroused its anger and fury. The idea is firmly rooted in bourgeois ideology that the proletariat's social revolution is a negative, illegitimate phenomenon, disrupting "organic" development, and at best the result of outside influences or of mistakes and miscalculations by the powers that be. The events of the 20th century, however, have forced the devotees of capitalism to turn more and more to the issue of revolution, since it has become impossible to ignore it. Lenin had already remarked on the involuntariness of this treatment in the days of the first Russian revolution. Bourgeois ideologists, he had written, did it "not because they are revolutionaries, but despite the fact that they are *not* revolutionaries"; they did it "of necessity and against their will", so that the bourgeoisie's "recognition of the revolution cannot be sincere, irrespective of the personal integrity of one bourgeois ideologist or another".¹

The non-acceptance of the revolution by bourgeois science showed itself with special force in the first decades after the October Revolution. The basic tone of literature about Lenin and the October Revolution was one of undisguised vicious anti-Sovietism. The Revolution was depicted as a "chance occurrence in history", as a "zigzag of history" that must be overcome. That was essentially the ideological foundation for intervention, blockade, and any action aimed at stifling this "bastard" system.

The tone changed a little under the impact of the USSR's victory over Nazi armies in World War II and the triumph of the socialist revolutions in a number of other countries. Some bourgeois writers gradually began to display elements of a new approach, and altered their assessment of the October Revolution and the socialist revolutions in other countries. They began to try and explain the Revolution, born of Russia's need for "modernisation", as a stage on the road to overcoming its backwardness and of its transformation into an "industrial" society. Interest in Lenin and the October Revolution sharply increased in the second half of the 1960s and 1970s. The number of publications on these themes increased explosively. Works of a more objective, or rather objectivist, character began to appear alongside traditionally anti-Soviet publications.²

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 126.

² At the beginning of the 1950s the eminent British bourgeois historian E.H. Carr had already published three volumes of his work on the Russian Revolution (E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution (1917-1923)*, Vols. 1-3, London, 1950-1953, and a number of other works on the history of the USSR and the philosophy of history (E.H. Carr, *The Interregnum*, London, 1956; *idem. What is History?*, London, 1952), which became widely known in the West. In the

Soviet historians have done considerable work to expose the various distortions of the history of the revolutionary movement in Russia;¹ and there is research by Marxists abroad criticising the bourgeois historiography of the October Revolution.² A convincing critique has been made of falsifications of the work and role of Lenin, of activity of Communist Parties in other countries, and of the Communist International.³

The ideological fight around Lenin and the October Revolution has not ceased for a day, and covers a very wide range of questions of the theory and practice of Leninism. For all the "pluralism" of views, approaches, and estimates, common to bourgeois and social-reformist historiography, however, traditional anti-Sovietism and anti-communism still predominate in it though they sometimes take on a more concealed and more sophisticated form than before, and appear "scientific-looking". Activity has been injected of late, too, into a non-bourgeois, but essentially anti-Soviet literature about Lenin and the October Revolution. This concerns a quite broad spectrum of writers: from Trotskyists (in both their "classical" and "modernised" dress) to right-wing revisionists (like Jean Ellenstein, Fernando Claudin, or Roger Garaudy); from anarchists to followers of the "Left-Liberal" tendency, which had its beginning somewhere in the circles of the old Russian emigrés. These trends in "Sovietology", enjoying a growing market, are trying to create a common political front of sorts of anti-communism and reformism in the

British Communists' journal *Marxism Today*, Eric Hobsbawm called Carr "one of the greatest academic historians of this country, and one of the ablest and most intelligent men working in the field of history", (*op. cit.*, 1962, No. 2, p. 47). Carr's works bear the stamp of contradictions associated with his conceptions of "shifts and continuity" in the historical process. He is not free of an exaggeration of the role of bourgeois democracy, although he recognises that there was no place for it in the concrete circumstances of Russia. For fuller details see Yu. I. Igritsky, *Myths of the Bourgeois Historiography and Realities of History. Present-Day American and British Historiography of the Great October Socialist Revolution*, Moscow, 1974, pp. 72-73 (in Russian).

¹ See, for example, Yu. A. Krasin, *Frightened by Revolution. A Critical Essay on Bourgeois Conceptions of Social Revolution*, Moscow, 1975; B. I. Marushkin, *Sovietology: Expectations and Blunders*, Moscow, 1976; *The Historical Experience of the October Revolution and the Critique of Bourgeois Historiography*, Moscow, 1977; B. I. Marushkin, G. Z. Joffe, N. V. Romanovsky, *The Three Revolutions in Russia and Bourgeois Historiography*, Moscow, 1977; K. I. Zarodov, *Economics and Politics in the Revolution. Some Contemporary Problems in the Light of Historical Practice*, Moscow, 1980 (all in Russian).

² See, for example, N. V. Romanovsky, *Foreign Marxist Historians in the Fight Against Bourgeois Falsifiers of the History of the Great October Revolution*, Moscow, 1977, (in Russian).

³ See, for example, G. Z. Sorkin, *Reality vs. Fictions. A Critique of Bourgeois and Reformist Historiography of the Communist International*, Moscow, 1974 (in Russian).

fight against the USSR, the socialist community, and the policy of peace and friendship among nations.¹

The main objects of attack are (1) the world historical significance of the October Revolution; (2) the pattern of the rise of the modern Communist movement; (3) the unity of the theory of Marx and Lenin.

The earlier denial of the international character of the Russian Revolution is being corrected more and more often in recent years by admission of its influence of one kind or another. It has become fashionable to speak in a general way of its great role, even as far as its recognition as "perhaps the century's most important single historical event", as Prof. R. L. Wolff of Harvard University has written.² Prof. J. H. Billington of Princeton University considers that "if a central problem for any nineteenth-century thinker was that of defining his attitude toward the French Revolution, central one for contemporary man is his appraisal of the Russian Revolution... Forces called into being by the upheaval of 1917 are even more forcefully mobilized and tangibly powerful than those called into being by the French Revolution of 1789 and the 'age of the democratic revolution'".³

We must not be seduced by such "compliments". Most often they simply cover up a fundamentally negative attitude to the October Revolution. The turn to this issue is itself often caused by a striving to find a more effective antidote to its influence. But for all that these admissions or half-admissions, and the growing interest in one aspect or another of the October Revolution reflect the triumphant march of its ideas in the modern world.

The French historians René Girault and Marc Ferro write as follows: "Since the Soviets' taking of power in 1917 the history of the USSR has concerned us directly and nothing of what concerns old Russia is any longer indifferent to us. The revolution of October, the Communist regime, the birth of a new society have exercised such a fascination that right to today their adversaries and their admirers scrutinise their origins, transformations, successes, and setbacks."⁴ Even more indicative is the view of the West Berlin historian G.W. Kron: "Over the almost 60 years since Lenin's revolution in Russia communism has developed into a great world

¹ For further details see T. T. Timofeyev, *The Working Class at the Centre of the Ideological and Theoretical Struggle*, op. cit., pp. 125-49, 261-84.

² Robert V. Daniels (Ed.). *The Russian Revolution*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, 1972, p. V.

³ James H. Billington, "Six Views of the Russian Revolution", *World Politics*, April 1966, No. 3, p. 452.

⁴ René Girault, Marc Ferro, *De la Russie à l'U.R.S.S.*, Nathan, Paris, 1974, p. 3.

movement".¹ The American S. Cohen recognises the October Revolution as one of the greatest modern ones.²

The themes of Western bourgeois publications are also altering and broadening. In some cases ones that previously used to attract no attention in the West are the object of research: for example, the social processes and mass movements; the mood of the peasants and the changes in it; the course of the revolution in localities; the role of the army in the years of the revolution and civil war; the Revolution's solution of the national question, etc. The circumstantial book by the Canadian historian J. L. H. Keep, *The Russian Revolution*, for example, has a characteristic sub-title *A Study in Mass Mobilization*.³ The Englishman Roger Pethybridge wants to explain "the social prelude to Stalinism",⁴ and the second volume of Marc Ferro's *The 1917 Revolution* is entitled *October. The Birth of a Society*.⁵

The starting point of the new historiographical constructs, however, is quite traditional; denial of the proletarian character of the revolution is deduced from the backwardness of pre-October Russian society. Keep even consigns the concept "proletarian revolution" to "the realm of revolutionary mythology".⁶ The backward Russian peasantry played the main role in the revolution according to this version; the working class is said to have been closely linked with it by a community of both way of life and world outlook. This backwardness was so deep that it of necessity predetermined the country's historical development. The veteran "sovietologist" Pipes⁷ comes close to Ellenstein⁸ in his striving to exaggerate the cultural backwardness of the masses of the Russian people in every way, even by comparison with their hard economic position.

The idea of the "immaturity" and "backwardness" of the Russian working class is put forward in various versions in the spirit of claiming that Russia was not ready for a socialist revolution; elements of spontaneity and "chaos and anarchy" in its struggle are played up, the growth of its political consciousness is glossed over, and doubt is thrown on the revolutionary traditions forged under the leader-

¹ W. Leonhard, *Was ist Kommunismus? Wandlungen einer Ideologie*, Munich, 1976, p. 7.

² *Soviet Studies*, 1977, No. 1, p. 137.

³ John L.H. Keep, *The Russian Revolution. A Study in Mass Mobilization*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1976.

⁴ Roger Pethybridge, *The Social Prelude to Stalinism*, Macmillan, London, 1974.

⁵ Marc Ferro, *La révolution de 1917*, Vol. 2: *Octobre. Naissance d'une société*, Aubier-Montaigne, Paris, 1971.

⁶ John L.H. Keep, *op. cit.*, p. XV.

⁷ R. Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*, London, 1974.

⁸ Jean Ellenstein, *Histoire de l'URSS*, Vol. 1, Paris, 1972.

ship of the Bolsheviks. Some writers try to prove, against the facts, that the Russian proletariat was politically indifferent to socialism, or even hostile towards it.¹

An endeavour to present the revolution in Russia as a special, local, purely Russian phenomenon is still the general methodological premise of present-day "Sovietology". The revolutionary struggle of the Russian proletariat and popular masses of Russia is accordingly often treated as a spontaneous revolt in the "purely Russian tradition". An analogy is even drawn between the behaviour of the masses in 1917-18 and during the peasant risings of the 17th and 18th centuries. As the English historian Paul Dukes has put it, "the 'dark people' were making their intentions clear enough with their axes and sickles".²

According to Marc Ferro the main motive guiding the millions of peasants, soldiers, and workers who took part in the Revolution was a striving for equality, and the classical model of representative democracy could not be taken in revolutionary Russia. Discarding the traditional thesis of the "passivity" of the masses, he finds a certain continuity in their "perpetual movement", and in the activity of the mass organisations and local groups (and not just the Soviets), which created a "state without a government" counterposed to the Provisional "government without a state".³ Generalising, he writes: "The revolution, most often represented as a conflict between the political parties, was no less a struggle between organisations without a political identity: trades unions against works committees, ward committees against Soviets of Deputies," etc.⁴ At the same time he cannot deny that Lenin relied on the will of the broad masses, who were not at all apathetic; it was precisely their activity that enabled the Bolsheviks to take power and hold it.⁵

John Keep also claims that the mass organisations were already "an incipient 'counter-authority'" in the spring of 1917. On that basis he tries to minimise the role of the October Revolution, which allegedly only quickened the process. He even concludes that "the October insurrection ... is less of a watershed than is customarily supposed", and explains the Bolsheviks' success by their having been able to take over the mass organisations, and to put "this rudimentary apparatus" at their service in "a governmental system under their own control".⁶ But after the new regime had consoli-

¹ For further details see B. I. Marushkin, G. Z. Joffe, N. V. Romanovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-92.

² Paul Dukes, *A History of Russia. Medieval, Modern, Contemporary*, Macmillan, London, 1974, p. 219.

³ Marc Ferro, *op. cit.*, pp. 433-36.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 433-36.

⁶ John L. H. Keep, *op. cit.*, pp. XII-XIII.

dated its authority, the Bolsheviks were allegedly able to render harmless the mass organisations and tame the spontaneous mass movements. This trick enables writers to return by a roundabout way to the beaten track of traditional anticommunists. Thus, Ferro sums up, "henceforth there is no history of the working class any longer but there is one of those who, having benefited from its confidence, proceeded to speak and act in its name".¹

Ferro and Pethybridge, while grieving over the "inadequate democratism" of the Soviet system, try to show that the "new ideas" in the social and cultural spheres were systematically sabotaged by the illiterate and semi-literate masses during the revolution and civil war years. For Pethybridge the Bolsheviks' break with the ideological baggage of "intellectuals" was mainly due to the atmosphere of "militarism" and "primitivism" created by the civil war². The principle of "obeying without arguing", he considers, quickly found its way to the hearts of the Russian masses in spite of the revolutionary dynamism displayed by them. Ferro speaks of the "socialist and libertarian ideas being constantly undermined by the traditional mentality" of the Russian peasants. According to him the representatives of the Russian village, who had begun to play a leading political role, "have introduced the spirit of violence into political and social relations, which had hitherto been only in village".³

Thus, although recent ("social") Sovietology has revised certain of the traditional premises and assumptions of the bourgeois historiography of the October Revolution, it has retained the thesis of the incapability of the working masses of Russia to realise the principles of liberty and democracy, ignoring the class sense of these concepts. It is important, however, that the thesis of the Bolsheviks as a "bunch of usurpers" is now being discarded by bourgeois Sovietologists, while their reliance on the broad popular masses is confirmed.

In the arguments presented about Russia's backwardness and the immaturity of the masses one distinctly hears echoes of the accusations made against the Bolsheviks in their day by Kautsky and Otto Bauer, that they were trying to impose their "Russian methods", in principle unacceptable, onto the West. In the latest works one can easily find the influence as well of the inventions and lies of the Sovietologists of the cold war period about the doctrine of the "dialectics of backwardness" that the American Meyer attributed to Lenin. According to Meyer Lenin considered the backwardness of tsarist Russia the source of the revolutionary nature of the Rus-

¹ Marc Ferro, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

² Roger Pethybridge, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-75, pp. 118-21, 179-80.

³ Marc Ferro, *op. cit.*, pp. 438, 440.

sian proletariat and peasantry, and on precisely such grounds assigned Russia a central place in the historical progress of humanity.¹ George Sabine characterised Leninism in the same spirit, as "an adaptation of Marxism to non-industrialized economies and to societies with a prevailingly peasant population", explaining its world-wide importance by the fact that "the world is full of such societies".² And the German-born American professor, von Laue, explained the October Revolution "as a revolt against backwardness", or the first "revolution of the underdeveloped countries". Since its main task was "to undergo a drastic process of modernization", it became the prototype of revolutions in developing countries.³

An original continuation of the idea that the October Revolution was a non-Marxian and non-European one is to be found in *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union* by Bennigsen and Wimbush⁴. While most works ascribe the role of the main driving force of the revolution to the peasant masses (above all the Russians), these authors advance the "many native Muslim elites" of the oppressed nations and nationalities of tsarist Russia to the fore. In their view the passage of a considerable part of them (mainly the nationalist intellectuals) to the side of the Bolsheviks largely determined the victory of the October Revolution and civil war.⁵ The passage of the local "elites" first to a position of "national socialism", and later of "national communism", was a marriage of convenience. Contrary to the well-known formula, the political programme of the "native elite" was said to be "socialist in form and national in content".⁶ The passage of the "natives" to the side of the Bolsheviks was due primarily to the chauvinism of the whiteguard governments, the shrewdness of the Bolsheviks, and the sincere belief of the nationalist intelligentsia that the latter's victory would strike a heavy blow not only to Russian imperialism but also to the whole of imperialist and colonialist Western civilisation.⁷ The idea that the October Revolution and building of socialism in the USSR became a model in a certain sense for the socio-economically and politically backward countries of the East, the Third World, is

¹ Alfred G. Meyer, *Leninism*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1957, pp. 257-73.

² George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*, George G. Harrap & Co., London, 1963, p. 806.

³ Theodore H. Von Laue, *Why Lenin? Why Stalin? A Reappraisal of the Russian Revolution, 1900-1930*, J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia and New York, 1964, pp. 16, 241.

⁴ Alexandre A. Bennigsen, S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union. A Revolutionary Strategy for the Colonial World*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1979.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-29, 30, 44.

not without its advantage; the reward is once more a complete denial of the significance of Leninism and Soviet experience for the "civilised West".

All these formulations, are, however, rejected by an elementary and well-known fact, namely, that the theoretical and political solutions proposed by Lenin have been carried out successfully in countries on several continents, and have led to a socialist transformation of life in them. The truth of Lenin's main conclusions and of the main patterns of the socialist revolution and socialist construction discovered by him have already been confirmed by the experience of countries very unlike one another that were at various levels of socio-economic development at the time when the old system was liquidated. True, the socialist transformation has not yet drawn the most developed countries of Western Europe into its orbit, or the USA or Japan. This is a fact. But even those who oppose Lenin's ideas themselves are more and more often recognising, and more and more clearly, that present Western society cannot be maintained in its old form, but must undergo changes. What changes? Those who speak of them, themselves often call for a kind of "synthesis" of the two social systems (socialism and capitalism). But for all their utopian (and reactionary) character, these schemes, and others like them, still contain a recognition that some of the opinions of the adherents of scientific socialism (even according to their enemies) are quite reasonable and should be paid attention to. That is a quite symptomatic admission!

An unprejudiced approach to the history of the Communist movement is still an extremely rare phenomenon in non-Marxian literature. Yet the course of history, the incontrovertible facts, and the obvious trends move certain authors from time to time to reject or deny the grossest falsifications, and to "admit" (even with reservations) the unproductiveness of anti-communism and even the more or less positive role of the communist movement. Among such works one can name the last book of the eminent leader of international Social-Democracy and theorist of Austro-Marxism, Otto Bauer,¹ and in part the multivolume work of the English economist, historian, and sociologist G. D. H. Cole.²

The pet thesis of all opponents of communism is that the Comintern was artificially created, and that its existence had no historical justification, because it only deepened the split in the labour movement and weakened it.³ By labelling the world revolution a "utopia"

¹ Otto Bauer, *Zwischen zwei Weltkriegen? Die Krise der Weltwirtschaft, der Demokratie und des Sozialismus*, Eugen Prager Verlag, Bratislava, 1936.

² G.D.H. Cole, *A History of Socialist Thought*, Vols. IV, V, Macmillan & Co., London, 1958, 1960.

³ For further details see G. Z. Sorkin, *op. cit.*, Ch. 1-3.

and a "myth",¹ they try to defend the positions of social-reformism, which at least helped capitalism in the period of the post-October revolutionary upsurge by holding the worker masses back from vigorous anti-capitalist actions.

Following the road laid by Kautsky, the historian Arthur Rosenberg before World War II and Ossip Flechtheim after it defended the thesis that the Comintern was created with one single aim, namely to become an organ for the immediate carrying out of the proletarian revolution in Western Europe, an instrument of world revolution.² At the time when Kautsky and his disciples were directly opposing the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat under the slogan of "pure democracy", Julius Braunthal, the historiograph of the three Internationals, was rather more cautious. But he, too, claimed that world revolution was the sole aim and *raison d'être* of the Communist International, and that "Lenin's conception of the world revolution ... unleashed a disastrous struggle in the working class about a phantom—the phantom of the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat frozen into a dogma".³ While recognising that Lenin had applied it in Russia in the peculiar conditions of a revolutionary situation, Braunthal declared that it "had no relation to the real balance of power and traditions of the labour movement in the lands in which the conditions for a Communist revolution did not exist".⁴

By identifying the failure of the first wave of the European revolution with defeat of the world revolution in general, and ignoring the responsibility of right-wing Social-Democratic leaders for that failure,⁵ Braunthal at the same time ascribed an allegedly untrue appraisal of the real balance of forces in Europe and America, and a lack of understanding of the psychology of European and American workers, to Lenin.

Meanwhile, in 1936 when the danger of a second world war hung over Europe and the world, and those who overtly fomented it, the German fascists, were proclaiming themselves the enemies of

¹ See, for example, the anthology of documents published by the West German historian T. Pirker, entitled *Utopie und Mithos der Weltrevolution. Zur Geschichte der Komintern 1920-1940*, Munich, 1964.

² Arthur Rosenberg, *A History of Bolshevism. From Marx to the First Five Years' Plan*, Oxford University Press, London, 1939, pp. 181-182; Ossip K. Flechtheim, *Weltkommunismus im Wandel*, Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, Cologne, 1965, p. 182.

³ Julius Braunthal, *Die Geschichte der Internationale*, Vol. 2, Hannover, 1963, p. 13.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ G.D.H. Cole, however, admitted that the German Social-Democratic leaders "feared the collapse of the existing [bourgeois] society much more than they hoped for a really new social order; and because of these fears they betrayed the Revolution" (*op. cit.*, Vol. IV, part II, p. 893).

democracy of any kind, and when the Soviet Union was not only holding out in capitalist encirclement but had made substantial advances towards socialism, and had become a powerful bastion of peace, it was none other than Otto Bauer who returned to the problems of the postwar revolutionary period. He raised very important issues: namely, who had proved right in the bitter dispute over the dictatorship of the proletariat and bourgeois democracy? Which regime had demonstrated the greater viability and strength? Had the experience of the October Revolution significance for Europe? Had the thesis about the "democratic alternative" advanced then by Social-Democrats as a counterweight to revolution stood the test of time and life?

In the foreword to his *Between Two World Wars?* he admitted that "history has rendered its verdict". Recognising the successes of socialism in the USSR and that "democracy has been killed by fascism in Central Europe", he concluded: "We must be blind to the facts of world history if these two great events do not affect our views of the road to socialism."¹

Bauer now saw that in Germany and Austria, where the proletariat had won only bourgeois democracy in 1918, "the class struggle had broken democracy; here fascism prevails". But in Russia, "where the proletariat had a few months previously set up its dictatorship, the class struggle had abolished classes"; there "a socialist society is in progress".² Recalling the differences in the course of the revolutions in Central Europe and Russia, he tried to justify his position then by saying that "all [international Social-Democracy] believed that this attempt [the Bolsheviks'] would shortly collapse". But he himself went on to admit that "all these views have been refuted by history itself", and that one could no longer hold such false views. International Social-Democracy, he wrote, had not believed a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat to be necessary in developed countries. "These mistakes, too, have been refuted today by history."³

Bauer made a detailed criticism of the reformist socialism that claimed that the working class could gradually, step by step, without revolution and tense struggle, "increase its power within bourgeois democracy, ... win ever broader concessions from bourgeois democracy, ... fill the forms of democracy with a socialist content, ... develop the capitalist social organisation into a socialist one through progressive reformist work... to develop bourgeois democracy into socialist".⁴ History, he now admitted, "has refuted this illusion. Where

¹ Otto Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 162-63.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 286-87.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

labour governments have come to power in democratic countries, they have been able of course to win some concessions from capitalism that have raised the capitalist mode of production to a higher technical, social, and cultural level, but they have nowhere been able to touch capitalist property relations themselves, the foundation of the capitalist mode of production. Where the bourgeoisie believe capitalist property relations to be menaced, there they abandon democracy and take refuge in fascist dictatorship".¹

In the 1960s European Social-Democracy's policy in the period of the post-October revolutionary upsurge was criticised mainly "from the left". That was more or less associated both with the increase in the working class's struggle and with the explosion of the student movement in France, West Germany and Italy, directed primarily against the bureaucratic-manipulator activity of the bourgeois state and monopolies. The well-known publicist Sebastian Haffner, for instance, wrote about the "great betrayal" of Ebert & Co., who committed "infanticide" when they strangled the German revolution in alliance with the same reactionaries and militarists who brought Hitler to power 14 years later.²

In their attempts to find an alternative to this disastrous Social-Democratic policy several writers have turned to the problems of the activity of the German workers' councils. In documentary essays they say that if Noske had not crushed the councils they might have become either "integrated organs of the new democratic, republican form of state", or a support point in Germany for "a resolute democracy of the masses", that would have helped the Weimar Republic resist the fascists' onslaught.³ Although these historians have gone no further than the Kautskian idea of a "third road", their works have helped burst the legend of Social-Democracy as the guarantee of democratic development.

Rather more critical appraisals of Social-Democratic policy than formerly have begun to appear as well in the historiography of other countries. Finnish Social-Democratic historians, for instance, now admit that the strategy of their party after "victory" in the civil war of 1918 was based on an exaggerated appraisal of the liberalism and democratism of the Finnish bourgeoisie. Therefore, with the crisis of bourgeois democracy "Social-Democratic reform-

¹ *Ibid.*

² Sebastian Haffner, *Die verratene Revolution, Deutschland, 1918/1919*, Scherz Verlag, Berne, Munich, Vienna, 1969, pp. 212, 214.

³ See Eberhard Kolb, *Die Arbeiterräte in der deutschen Innenpolitik. 1918-1919*, Droste Verlag, Düsseldorf, 1962, pp. 11-12; Peter von Oertzen, *Betriebsräte in der Novemberrevolution*, Droste Verlag, Düsseldorf, 1963, p. 67; Reinhard Rürup, *Probleme der Revolution in Deutschland 1918/19*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1968, p. 50.

ism also failed".¹ The American historian C. F. Brand, speaking of the policy of British Labour leaders, notes that the Councils of Action that arose in 1920 were an effective means of achieving political ends, and eloquent evidence of the British left forces' striving to save revolutionary Russia which had become a symbol of future for the workers although a few of the leaders liked the Bolsheviks and their methods².

At the same time attempts to discredit the Communist movement and the Comintern have not stopped. Julius Braunthal, in trying to prove that there were no grounds for the existence of the Comintern and Communist Parties when the revolutionary wave had already begun to subside, declared that the time of reformism had come; since the tasks of Communists and Social-Democrats in the united workers' front were allegedly "identical", there had been no need at all for a split. In trying to make this claim more convincing he depicted the decisions of the 3rd Comintern Congress as trying to order Communist Parties to avoid revolutionary actions in the future and restrict themselves to "peaceful everyday struggles for the immediate interests of the workers"³. Günther Nollau and Franz Borkenau also reinterpreted the sense of the Communists' new tactics in a similar way⁴.

Fernando Claudin willingly argues a "permanent crisis" in the Communist International and in scientific communism in general, writing of "Bolshevik version of Marxism", declaring the October Revolution to be "solely Russian"; extolling Kautskianism, he claims that the European labour movement would have legitimately returned to its position⁵.

A rather different idea is also developed in special detail and with eagerness in the contemporary bourgeois literature; its source was the inventions of the "Lefts" considered in earlier chapters (namely, of Pannekoek, Gorter, and figures in the KAPD). These "Lefts" accused the Communist International of being simply "an instrument of the policy of Soviet Russia" and that the reasons for

¹ *Suomen työväenliikkeen historia*, Joensuu, Helsinki, 1976, p. 175.

² C.F. Brand, *The British Labour Party: A Short History*, University California Press, Stanford, 1974, pp. 69-72.

³ Julius Braunthal, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 258, 355-56.

⁴ Günther Nollau, "Die Komintern. Vom Internationalismus zur Diktatur Stalins", *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, Beilage zur Wochenzeitung das Parlament*, Bonn, 8 January 1964, p. 12; Franz Borkenau, *Der europäische Kommunismus. Seine Geschichte von 1917 bis zur Gegenwart*, Francke-Verlag, Bern, 1952, p. 42. The fact that the Comintern warned against the danger of Communists' sliding into positions of reformism, Borkenau treated as the "contradictoriness" of its decision.

⁵ See Fernando Claudin, *La Crisis del movimiento comunista. De la Komintern al Kominform*, Ruedo ibérico, Barcelona, 1978; *idem*, "Democracy and Dictatorship in Lenin and Kautsky", *New Left Review*, 1977, No. 106.

changes in its tactics were consequently to be found in the requirements of Moscow's home and foreign policy. Borkenau, for instance, had long ago written that the ending of the civil war induced the Russians to act less ruthlessly than before: "Russia was tired. It did not want more heavy fighting, and the moods prevailing in Moscow were naturally transmitted, directly, to the Comintern, whose leading men were all Russians and saw the world with Russian eyes."¹ Nollau, pointing to the "internal crisis" that developed in Russia, treated it, and not subsidence of the revolutionary wave in the West, as the reason why the Communist Parties of the European countries were forced to switch from struggle for revolutionary aims to support of the workers' everyday demands, and at the same time to step up actions in defence of Soviet Russia. His claim was that these decisions of the Comintern's pushed Communist Parties onto a road of reformism and opportunism². The notorious anti-communist Leonard Schapiro, exaggerating Russia's interest in establishing trade relations with capitalist countries and obtaining concessions, considered that "the fomenting of revolutions was not the best way of achieving them" and that the Bolsheviks therefore allegedly worked at the Third Congress of the Comintern "to assert the primacy of Russian interests".³ Flechtheim, developing that idea, came to a statement, which he made his main conclusion, that the Communist movement passed from the "internationalism of the world revolution" to "Communist nationalism".⁴

All these views and opinions thus boil down ultimately to one point: to an attempt to prove the now more than 60-year-old thesis that the communist movement is nothing but "the hand of Moscow", and that the Comintern was the artificial creation of the Russian Bolsheviks, put into service by them to "export revolution".

In the light of many years' experience it is obvious that all these claims and assertions have been refuted by life itself. No one has ever demonstrated that Lenin's party imposed its views on others, or strove for selfish ends. Its sole task was to help fraternal parties stand on their own feet, learn the best way of tackling their own problems, and struggle together against the common enemy. That was the essence of a genuinely revolutionary internationalist line.

¹ Franz Borkenau, *World Communism. A History of the Communist International*, Ann Arbor Paperback, 1962, pp. 222, 232.

² Günther Nollau, *Die Internationale. Wurzeln und Erscheinungsformen des proletarischen Internationalismus*, Verlag für Politik und Wirtschaft, Cologne, 1959, pp. 63, 66-67.

³ Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Random House, New York, 1960, p. 218.

⁴ Ossip K. Flechtheim, *Bolschewismus 1917-1967. Von der Weltrevolution zum Sowjetimperium*, Europa Verlag, Vienna, Frankfurt on the Main, Zurich, 1967, p. 29.

There is no disputing that the founding and development of Communist Parties, as truly Marxist-Leninist, revolutionary parties, took place under the banner of the ideas of Leninism, ideas that found their real embodiment in the gains of the Great October Revolution. But could it have been otherwise?

As B. N. Ponomarev said in connection with the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Comintern, "It is even difficult to imagine what would have been the fate of the revolutionary labour movement if the Comintern had not been founded. Could the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat have retained and maintained its position as political parties?... There is no doubt that without the Comintern the revolutionary labour movement would have been doomed to long, difficult quests for the correct, reliable road... The Comintern helped the sound, healthy forces in the international labour movement and its revolutionary wing to put obstacles in the way of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, to overcome reformism, and to ensure them ideological and organisational independence."¹ The Comintern was not only able to unite in its ranks all the best, internationalist forces of the international labour movement, and all its national contingents; cadres of experienced leaders of the Leninist type were moulded and given a militant training in its ranks. The solidarity of the fraternal Communist Parties with the Soviet Union and its peace policy has always corresponded to the vital interests of all nations.

Bourgeois and social-reformist ideologists have been trying particularly intensively in recent years, in their unceasing efforts to weaken the international influence of Leninism, to sever its connections with Marxism, and to oppose the two to each other. The aim of this ideological subversion is simple, even primitive, namely, to elevate Marx and belittle Lenin. Some writers are now ready not just to admit Marx and Engels' critique of pre-monopoly capitalism but even some of their ideas about socialism and communism, which inevitably had a general character because the founders of Marxism detested unfounded fantasies. But anathema is pronounced on Lenin's theory of imperialism, the socialist revolution, and the building of socialism, a theory that has really been put into practice, because it is dangerous for contemporary imperialism.²

Matters sometimes develop strangely. In France Marxism has already been an official subject of teaching in certain higher educational institutions for several years. This is "university Marxism", deprived of its revolutionary content and looking like the "Katheder

¹ B. N. Ponomarev, *On the 60th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Communist International*, op. cit., pp. 5-6 (in Russian).

² See, for example, Fernando Claudin, *Eurocommunism and Socialism*, London, 1978.

socialism" of a century ago, but differing from it in being specially called upon to prove the absence of any continuity between the views of Marx and Lenin's theory. The French political scientist and philosopher J. P. Garnier has remarked in his *Attenuated Marxism* that it is employed by the ruling class in order "to renovate the form of its hegemony".¹

A world congress of philosophy was held in Düsseldorf in the summer of 1978. In opening it the then President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Walter Scheel, the leader of the Free Democratic Party, the party of the liberal bourgeoisie, said: "Marx's thoughts determine the life of millions of people", without them "it would have been impossible to understand the actual situation in, for example, the economy, social life or science in the FRG". And Scheel called upon the West "not to yield this intelligent German entirely to the Marxists".

One of the most common pseudo-scientific tricks of proving the difference between the views of Marx and Lenin is to claim, following Kautsky, that Marx was concerned with the *theoretical* aspect of the problems of social development while Lenin was concerned above all with the *practical* aspect. Accordingly Marx allegedly attributed decisive importance to the *objective* preconditions and factors of the struggle for socialism, while Lenin is said to have given preference to the *subjective* factor, i.e., the role of classes, parties, and first and foremost the revolutionary party of the proletariat.

It would be naive to deny that there are no few differences between the work of Marx and of Lenin, primarily associated with the fact that they lived in different historical epochs.

Karl Marx in fact gave his main attention to theoretical substantiation of the revolutionary struggle for socialism, and analysis of its objective preconditions and factors. That was due not only to his personal qualities and inclinations, but also, above all, to the circumstances of the period in which he lived. The objective conditions of socialism were then still far from matured (as Marx and Engels themselves wrote many times). But it was necessary to prepare the working class for the socialist revolution, and the most important part of that was theoretical substantiation of the necessity of socialism, proof of the historical inevitability of the raising of society to that level, and elucidation of the general conditions for realising that process. It is a matter of the majestic scientific discoveries of Marx and Engels, and the real revolution they made in development of the social sciences.

¹ J. P. Garnier, *Le marxisme lénifiant ou la politique bourgeoise au poste de commande*, Paris, 1979, p. 77.

Can it be claimed, however, that Marx was only an armchair thinker, a kind of "pure theoretician"? No! Practical revolutionary activity had a very notable place in his life. For it was precisely Marx and Engels who were the founders and leaders of the two first revolutionary organisations of the international proletariat, viz., the Communist League and the International Workingmen's Association. They took a direct part in the revolutions of 1848-49 and in organising support for the Paris Commune. Thus, an organic unity of scientific and theoretical and revolutionary practical work, study of the objective preconditions of the struggle for socialism, and the most intent attention to the subjective factor of that struggle, i.e., the working class and its political party, are the real content of Marx's life and work.

Lenin lived in a different epoch, when socialism had been transformed from a theoretical problem into a burning political issue, and the socialist revolution had matured. And because he was a Marxist and proceeded from material dialectics and historical materialism, what was new in the new epoch and the specific features of the tasks it posed found full, profound reflection in all his work. All Lenin's discoveries in the fields both of revolutionary theory and of revolutionary practice, and the whole content of Leninism as a whole, were permeated by the spirit of the socialist revolution. What he did as a practical revolutionary was colossal, but not one practical step or one revolutionary action would have succeeded if he had not thought it out and substantiated it in theory. That is why "there is no Marxism, and cannot be, without the new that was contributed to its development by Lenin. *Leninism is Marxism of the contemporary epoch, the integral, continually developing theory of the international working class.*"¹

The unity of Marxism and Leninism has been and is unfailingly stressed by all leading figures of the Communist movement. Antonio Gramsci, for example, wrote: "Marx is a creator of *Weltanschauung*—but what is the position of Ilyich? Is it purely subordinate and subaltern? The explication is in Marxism itself—science and action. ...To draw a parallel between Marx and Ilyich to arrive at a hierarchy is stupid and waste of time; they are two phases—science and action, which are at the same time homogeneous and heterogeneous."²

Bourgeois and reformist ideologists, while trying nevertheless to counterpose Lenin to Marx, are forced to distort the views of both. By interpreting Marx's economic theory in a one-sided way in the spirit of vulgar materialism (à la Bernstein), they ascribe

¹ *Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU on the 110th Anniversary of Lenin's Birth, op. cit., p. 4 (in Russian).*

² Antonio Gramsci, *Il materialismo storico e la filosofia di Benedetto Croce*, Editori Riuniti, Rome, 1971, pp. 87-88.

an unlimited belief in the "organic development of society" to him, depicting him as a complete "determinist" or fatalist. Having correspondingly treated Lenin's statements, they convert him into a "pure voluntarist". Only in that way they manage ultimately to get a "substantiation" of their completely false thesis that "determinism gives way to voluntarism" in Leninism.¹

The first thing the falsifiers do is to make an absolute of Lenin's ideas about the growing role of the *subjective factor* in the revolutionary process, and at the same time to belittle or ignore everything Lenin said about the *objective basis* of the transition from capitalism to socialism. But Lenin invariably based himself in all his statements on the conclusion solidly established by Marxists that the objective conditions in the developed countries were ripe for the socialist revolution by the beginning of World War I. His works on imperialism exposed the departure of Kautsky and other Social-Democratic theorists from the conclusions they themselves had drawn earlier. He also showed that their attempts to prove the "immaturity" of the Russian conditions (which seemed easy in view of their obvious backwardness compared with the West European ones) were only an excuse for them to justify the "immaturity" of the conditions in the West as well, in a roundabout way, and so justify their rejection of the revolution in general. But Lenin himself, while constantly stressing the *objective* possibility and necessity of the international socialist revolution, naturally paid paramount attention to the role of the *subjective factor*, i.e., to problems of rallying and organising the social forces capable and desirous of taking capitalist society by revolutionary storm. Consistent Marxist determinism, moreover, underlay all his notions about the subjective conditions of the revolution, because all the political, ideological, and psychological factors influencing the action of classes were ultimately based on real economic foundations. When the role of the last is being determined, the interaction of the various factors, however, is by no means mechanical.²

The second step of bourgeois interpreters of Leninism is maximum contraction of the concept of the subjective factor and the subjective conditions of the revolution. For Lenin this concept embraced "the class-consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of millions, spurred on by a most acute struggle of classes",³ whereas everything is reduced in the writings of bourgeois authors to the role of the party, "elite", and leaders. The "*theory of avant-gardism*"

¹ For fuller details see Yu. A. Krasin, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-103.

² For fuller details see Yu. A. Krasin, *Lenin, Revolution, and the Present Day*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 143, 146; K.I. Zarodov, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-32.

³ V.I. Lenin, "Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1982, pp. 95-96.

invented and ascribed to Lenin interprets his theory on the revolutionary Marxist party and its leading role as an endeavour to create a "cadre party" in which some exclusive commanding centre of "professional revolutionaries" dictates its will to the party, and through it to the masses. For that purpose Lenin's plan for creating an illegal party in the conditions of autocratic Russia at the beginning of the 20th century is extrapolated and "totalitarianised" without any grounds, the history of the struggle of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks is treated in a distorted way, and the essence of the principle of democratic centralism, party discipline, etc., is twisted. Having made such manipulations it is no longer difficult to ascribe to Lenin a desire to build a party as an instrument of "revolution-making", as "a machinery (apparat) that could be used effectively as the generals of the revolution might see fit to use it". Lenin's attention to problems of revolutionary organisation is explained exclusively by a desire to convert the labour movement into an instrument of "the conscious leadership" and to give the party "the task that Marx had envisioned as being fulfilled by the working class".¹ Herbert Marcuse claims, on the same plane, that there was a "transformation of the proletariat from the subject to an object of the revolutionary process", since "the 'subjective factor' of revolutionary strategy is monopolized by the Party, which assumes the character of a professional revolutionary organization directing the proletariat".²

The third step on the road of "voluntarising" Lenin's views is the falsifiers' revival once more of the initial claims of Kautsky, Otto Bauer, and others, that Lenin had, on the whole, absorbed the methods of pre-Marxian revolutionaries and was guilty of Jacobinism, Blanquism, Bakuninism, etc. Incidentally, when we remember that Kautsky compared Lenin with Stepan Razin, it does not sound so strange when Hermann Weber names Nechayev among the so-called predecessors of the Bolsheviks.³

One now finds objections, however, to the direct identification of Bolshevism with terrorism even among anticommunists. A. G. Meyer, for example, had to admit that "there was no violent terror" in the first months of Soviet power, that the Cheka [Extraordinary Commission.—*Ed.*] "began its reign of terror only after ... the attempted assassination of Lenin", and that this terror was "in marked contrast with the lenient treatment, that White generals received immediately after the revolution".⁴ He therefore came to

¹ A. G. Meyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 51, 52, 291.

² Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism. A Critical Analysis*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1958, pp. 30, 31, 40.

³ Hermann Weber, *Demokratischer Kommunismus?*, Verlag, J.H.W. Dietz Nachfolger, Hannover, 1969, p. 24.

⁴ A. G. Meyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-94.

the conclusion that civil war and terror were not an end in themselves for Lenin and the Bolsheviks. But he thereupon explained them as the consequence (sic!) of a mistaken estimate of the possibilities of building socialism in Russia.

Lenin is thus said to be guilty indirectly if not directly, of a desire to assert his own authority, employing "ruthless methods", and was allegedly convinced that "the end justifies the means". The West German professor, Walter Grottian, also argues roughly along those lines about Leninism as a "guide to action", accusing Lenin on the basis of similar distortions and inventions of not recognising "any eternal and general binding moral values".¹ Julius Braunthal, too, was not far from the professional anti-communists when he ascribed to Lenin a belief "in the miraculous power of force" and readiness without much thinking "to put human lives at stake".² These "critics" thus pass from outwardly pseudo-scientific polemics to ordinary lies.

This malicious myth about Lenin the "voluntarist", founded on distortion of the very essence of the proletarian revolution, had already been objected to sharply, we must note, at the very height of the events. In an article "The Tribute of History" in *L'Ordine nuovo* (7 July 1919) Antonio Gramsci had already written that the proletarian revolution "demands that all men be spiritually and historically consciously involved". It had consequently to overcome unheard of difficulties and obstacles, and "history consequently demanded monstrous tribute for its good outcome such as the Russian people have been compelled to pay.... The Russian Communists are a set of people of the first order" who "have acquired a consciousness of responsibility, exact and precise, cold and sharp, like the sword of the conquerors of empires". As for Lenin, "he has shown himself, as all who have been close to him testify, the greatest statesman of contemporary Europe; ... the man who succeeds in mastering by his vast talent all the social forces of the world that can be turned to the benefit of the revolution".³

Another reproach against Lenin regularly put into circulation is that Leninism may be a valuable doctrine, but only for Russia, or at best for underdeveloped countries; that it lacks a universal international ring, and beyond doubt "does not apply" to developed capitalist countries, and does not betoken inevitable victory of the revolution in them.

But that claim has nothing in common with the truth. Anyone

¹ Walter Grottian, *Lenins Anleitung zum Handeln. Theorie und Praxis sowjetischer Aussenpolitik*, Westdeutscher Verlag, Cologne-Opladen, 1962, pp. 41-42, 65-67.

² Julius Braunthal, "Otto Bauer. Ein Lebensbild", *op. cit.*, p. 83.

³ Cited from *Il pensiero di Gramsci*, Editori Riuniti, Rome, 1972, p. 31.

in the least objective cannot help recognising that Lenin by no means relied in his work just on sources relating to Russia or underdeveloped countries; he studied and generalised data relating to all countries and areas of the world, and to world development as a whole. One can say that there has been no one among Marxists since Marx and Engels who was able to assimilate such a mass of facts covering the most diverse fields and the most varied regions, and turn them into a single amalgam.

In that connection we must note that the critics of Leninism, when drawing sometimes very far-reaching conclusions, themselves do not rely on a deep study of the diverse factors or on serious investigation of the objective and subjective facts, but on abstract inferences and deductions as a rule dictated by purely pragmatic considerations. The material for speculations of that kind is often taken from chance sources (above all ones hostile to Leninism) or spun out of thin air. Facts are assembled to confirm ready-made conceptions, with no concern for a comprehensive grasp of the subject, or study of it in all its connections and consequences.

Nothing like that can be said about Lenin. His conclusions were always based on a very profound study of both the objective facts and the subjective views of various authors. Convincing evidence of that is the preliminary material in his *Philosophical Notebooks*, *Notebooks on Imperialism*, and notebooks *Marxism on the State*, and his many sketches and plans. No reader can help being astonished by the colossal volume of facts and views that Lenin employed to substantiate one conclusion or another. He compared various sources, tested and retested his conclusions, before making them public. He considered it his duty, to study and pay attention to the works both of authors close to him in spirit and of his opponents. He recognised that there could be interesting facts, observations, and conclusions in the works of serious bourgeois scholars which, when cleansed of idealist rubbish and subjectivism, should be employed by Marxian science.

The content of Lenin's works was by no means confined to Russia. In his works on imperialism, and many others, he appeared as a direct continuer of Marx in study of the laws of the evolution of the capitalist formation as such. He came forward as a very profound analyst of the processes of world capitalism, above all of its economically most developed parts, which was natural, because the patterns and trends of development of any organism can only be disclosed by studying its highest, rather than its lowest types. It was not fortuitous, too, that he expressed the most profound judgments about the features of the fight for socialism in the highly developed capitalist countries.

Marxism, of course, has always had many opponents. And there

have been no few attempts to "touch it up" or "put it to rights" and "supplement" it, or create a new theory that could take its place and indicate "the only true path" to humanity. According to *The New York Times* more than three thousand different theories of social development have arisen and died in the non-socialist world since 1917 alone! No one now can even remember what these theories were or who were their "parents". But Marxism-Leninism has passed all the tests with honours and remains the banner of the revolutionary struggle of the international proletariat.

The struggle between the adherents of Marxism-Leninism and its opponents continues. It is developing with an obvious superiority of the ideas of the great revolutionary theory of the working class. But the fight is by no means easy or simple. Because, while Marxism-Leninism and its adherents rely on the facts of living experience, and appeal to men's reason, its opponents, anti-Marxists and anti-communists, exploit prejudices generated in people's consciousness by centuries of the domination of private property, and strengthened many times over in our day through the flexible course of the monopolies and the operations of the monstrous machine of the mass media. Prejudices of that kind are very persistent, and constitute an important support for socio-political and ideological conservatism, and even reaction.

Attempts to discredit Leninism by any means, and to undermine its influence, are an important part of the contemporary ideological activity of the bourgeoisie, which is endeavouring above all to "deleninise" the labour movement. As Ezekias Papaioannou has justly noted, "the bourgeoisie and its hired spokesmen go to all lengths to make people believe that Lenin's ideas are outworn and obsolete. But, obviously nobody fights what is outdated or dead".¹

The vanguard of the labour movement still preserves faith in its great theory—Marxism-Leninism. According to UNESCO figures the works of Lenin have stood at the top of the world list for number of translations into other languages, which is not surprising, since his name, his works, and his teaching, developed and enriched by his heirs and successors in all corners of the planet, are the ideological banner of our century and our whole epoch.

Lenin's ideas and activities were not just innovatory; they are discoveries of genius of fundamentally new directions of social progress. They have not simply expressed the needs of an epoch but have also fostered their very formation. As Boris Ponomarev said in his paper on the 110th anniversary of Lenin's birth, "Leninism *yesterday* was victory of the October Revolution and the building of the first socialist society, a powerful call for freedom and

¹ *World Marxist Review*, 1980, No. 3, p. 23.

social justice that brought hundreds of millions of people into the fight.

"Leninism *today* is the real socialism that distinguishes the community of socialist states; it is the powerful communist and liberation movement; it is the liquidation of colonial domination and the creation of new, independent states; it is the radical change in the balance of power in favour of socialism and peace, and the possibility of banishing war from the life of humankind.

"Leninism *tomorrow* is communist society in the USSR, the triumph of socialism in many other countries, and new victories for the forces of social and national emancipation; it is important progress in the fight for stable, just peace and friendship of all nations."¹

Marxism-Leninism has no analogue in history in the scope of the problems covered or in the degree to which the conclusions drawn are realised in practice, or in its steady influence on the world revolutionary process. It is a real pinnacle of modern humanity's intellectual development, and a symbol of the social renovation of the world.

¹ B.N. Ponomarev, *op. cit.*, p. 5 (in Russian).

NAME INDEX

A

Abdullaev, Z. Z.—459
 Adibekov, G. M.—546
 Adler, Friedrich—154, 209, 212-14,
 256, 260, 262, 368, 377, 394, 413,
 575, 582, 586, 587, 673, 674
 Adler, Max—283-85
 Adler, Victor—154, 174
 Alatri, P.—557
 Alessandri Palma, Arturo—441
 Alexandrov, I. G.—338
 Alexandrov V. V.—264, 490, 571, 595
 Alexeyev, M. V.—79
 Altfater, V. M.—133
 Amelin, P. P.—339
 Andersen Nexö, Martin—253, 684
 Anderson, P. H.—143
 Andersson, E.—253
 Andrae, C. G.—168
 Andrassy, Gyula—187
 Andreev, A. M.—43
 Andropov, Yu. V.—625
 Anguiano, Daniel—520
 Antipov, N. K.—102
 Antonov, A. A.—43
 Antonov-Ovseyenko, V. A.—70, 72,
 85, 315
 Anuchin, D. N.—338
 Anwelt, Jaan—78, 306
 Appleton, William A.—373
 Arismendi, Rodney—712
 Arizala, José—439
 Armand, Inessa (Blonina, E.)—160,
 345, 676
 Artem (Sergeyev), F. A.—62-63, 79,
 304
 Aulard, François-Alphonse—349
 Austerlitz, Friedrich—212, 256
 Avksentiev, N. D.—42
 Avrus, A. I.—687
 Azizbekov, Meshadi—459

B

Bach, A. N.—119
 Badayev, A. E.—125

Badi, Sh. M.—459
 Balabanova, Angelica—278
 Balfour, Arthur James—127
 Balino, Carlos E.—439
 Banning, W.—260, 371
 Barbusse, Henri—142, 349, 515, 640,
 666, 681, 684
 Bartel, Walter—158
 Barth, Emil—192
 Barthou, Louis—613
 Bashkirov, A.—459
 Baskakov, G. F.—240
 Batlle y Ordóñez, José—436
 Bauer, Gustav—185, 205
 Bauer, Otto—141, 153, 154, 174, 209-
 11, 213-15, 255-57, 268, 285-87,
 291-94, 368, 377, 394, 405, 407,
 416, 497-99, 583, 671-73, 720, 722,
 724, 732, 733
 Bayeva, L. K.—104
 Beilin, A. E.—339
 Bekhterev, V. I.—119
 Bell, Thomas (Tom)—163, 242, 518, 541
 Benes, F.—83
 Bennigsen, Alexandre A.—721
 Berezin, D. E.—333
 Berinkey, D.—217
 Bernstein, Eduard—157, 173, 175,
 260, 262, 359, 730
 Berzins, J. A.—181, 278
 Bessmertny, E. D.—686
 Besteiro, Julian—260
 Beyer, Hans—206
 Bharati, Subraman—446
 Bidegaray, M.—362
 Billings, Warren—165, 576
 Billington, James H.—717
 Bimba, Anthony—165, 245, 566
 Birman, M. A.—648
 Blagoev, Dimitar—649, 686
 Blok, A. A.—119
 Blum, Léon—174, 515, 564, 587, 671
 Blyakhin, P. A.—332
 Blyukher, V. K.—133, 316
 Bobiński, Stanislaw—135
 Bodermann, Marino—519
 Bogdanov, A. A.—337

Böhm, Vilmos—221, 224, 415
 Bonch-Bruyevich, M. D.—133
 Bonch-Bruyevich, V. D.—112
 Borah, William E.—684
 Bordiga, Amadeo—162, 237, 508, 517,
 578, 581, 591, 592, 597, 606
 Boris III—185
 Borisov, N. B.—124
 Borkenau, Franz—726, 727
 Borkowski, J.—658
 Borodin, M. M.—170, 453
 Borsig, Ernst von—193
 Böttcher, Paul—644
 Bourbons—593
 Bracke (Desrousseaux), Alexandre-Marie—673
 Bradley, John—308
 Braginsky, M. I.—462
 Brammer, K.—157
 Brandão, Octávio—437
 Brandler, Heinrich—528, 643, 644,
 677
 Branting, Hjalmar—168, 260-63, 371,
 404, 599, 673
 Braun, Adolf—404, 407, 409
 Braunthal, Julius—210, 212, 287,
 292, 371, 409, 723, 726, 733
 Breshko-Breshkovskaya, E. K.—128
 Brezhnev, L. I.—15, 16, 21, 22, 691,
 695, 711
 Briggs—313
 Broński, Mieczysław (Warszawski)—
 83
 Broz Tito, Josip—82
 Bruhat, Jean—239, 510
 Brusilov, A. A.—133
 Bryant, Louise—82
 Bryusov, V. Y.—119
 Bubnov, A. S.—70
 Budyonny, S. M.—133
 Buhali, Larbi—469
 Bukharin, N. I.—110, 114, 115, 117,
 118, 267, 273, 278, 331, 403, 483,
 530, 548, 570, 571, 576, 581, 597,
 598, 606, 635
 Bull, E.—169
 Bunin, I. A.—119

C

Cachin, Marcel—161, 260, 345, 515,
 545, 586, 637, 639
 Cai Hesen—450
 Candeloro, Giorgio—236, 364, 410,
 509, 591
 Carr, Edward H.—715, 716

Carsten, F. L.—210, 213, 214, 558
 Častek, S.—135
 Chapayev, V. I.—133, 317
 Charikov, T. M.—492
 Chekharin, E. M.—712
 Chen Duxiu—450
 Chen Yi—449
 Cherneiko, G. A.—650
 Chernov, V. M.—42, 89, 91, 92
 Chernukha, Z. V.—362, 515, 562,
 665
 Cheverev, A. M.—316
 Chicherin, G. V.—85, 265, 474, 475,
 500, 610-14
 Chkheidze, N. S.—32, 33
 Chopp, E.—135
 Chudnovsky, G. I.—72
 Chumakov, M.—492
 Churchill, Winston—297, 313
 Claudin, Fernando—716, 726, 728
 Clausewitz, Karl von—545
 Clemenceau, Georges—159, 190, 223,
 259, 261, 346
 Coates, W. P.—350
 Codovilla, Victorio—435, 713
 Cohen, S.—718
 Čopić, Vladimir—230
 Crispin, Arthur—401, 415, 514
 Cuninghame, Thomas—213, 224
 Cuno, Wilhelm—636-38, 641-43
 Curzon, George—351, 614, 671, 684
 Czastek, S.—317
 Czerny, Y.—521

D

Dahlem, Franz—514
 Dan, F. I.—33, 501
 D'Annunzio, Gabriele—555, 556
 D'Aragona, Ludovico—163, 364, 509
 Das, Chitta Ranjan—446
 Daskalov, Raiko—185
 Daszyński, Ignacy—225
 David, Eduard—157
 Davidovich, D. S.—645, 646
 Davidson, A. B.—465, 466
 De Brouckère, Louis—404, 587
 Debs, Eugene—165, 567
 Deng Xiaoping—450, 452
 Deng Zhongxia—450-52
 Denikin, A. I.—78, 79, 224, 290,
 307, 308, 312-14, 485, 526, 617
 Deutsch, Julius—210, 211, 213
 Deutscher, Isaac—32
 De Valera, Eamon—243, 663
 Devyatkina, T. F.—445, 447

Diamandescu, T.—317
Días, Everardo—437
Didenko, G. D.—608
Dimitrov, Georgi—232, 649, 651, 652, 654, 686
Dittmann, Wilhelm—192
Dmitrenko, V. P.—486, 489
Dmitrievič, D.—399
Dombal, T.—657
Domnich, M. Y.—411
Drexler, Anton—558
Drobizhev, V. Z.—101, 103
Du Bois, William—462
Dukes, Paul—719
Dukhonin, N. N.—77, 78, 107
Dumoulin, Georges—410
Dunayevsky, A.—346
Duncker, Hermann—193
Dundić, Oleko—317
Dutov, A. I.—77, 89
Dutschke, R.—53
Dybenko, P. E.—47, 85
Dzerzhinsky, F. E.—70, 74, 82, 87, 88, 113, 129, 610

E

Eberl, Hugo (Albert)—266, 267, 275, 643
Ebert, Friedrich—157, 186, 192, 193, 198, 200, 203, 256, 284, 360, 561, 643, 677, 725
Egger, Heinz—144, 250, 259, 519
Egorov, A. G.—712
Egorov, A. I.—133
Egorov, I. G.—63
Egorov, I. I.—492
Egorova, M. N.—445
Eichhorn, Robert E.—200, 514
Einstein, Albert—681
Eisenberger, J.—288
Eisner, Kurt—205, 260
Eldersch—213
Elizarov, M. T.—85
Ellenbogen, Wilhelm—260
Ellenstein, Jean—716, 718
Engels, Frederick—12, 52, 57, 83, 104, 255, 426, 535, 560, 689, 694-98, 702, 709-11, 728-30, 734
Eremeev, L.—43
Eritsian, Kh. A.—90
Erzberger, Matthias—561, 589
Evserov, R. Y.—179

F

Fabre, A.—562
Fainsod, Merle—31

Fajardo, S. V.—441
Faure, Paul—415, 515, 564, 582
Feder, Gottfried—558
Fedoseyev, P. N.—712
Fedyukin, S. A.—339
Fekete, Jozef—317
Ferdinand I (Coburg)—185
Ferrara, M.—509
Ferro, Marc—717-20
Filippovič, F.—399
Fimmen, Edo—373, 409, 586, 605, 639, 640
Firsov, F. I.—379, 380, 522, 532, 579
Fischer, Anton—195
Fischer, Ruth—528, 589, 597
Flechtheim, Ossip—723, 727
Florin, Wilhelm—514
Foch, Ferdinand—204
Foster, William Z.—165, 245, 247, 511, 565-68, 604, 668
France, Anatole—349, 681, 695
Francis, David—132
Frei, Bruno—156
Fréville, Jean—515, 516
Frey, C.—249
Fridman, L. A.—468
Friedheim, R. L.—244
Friesland, Ernst (Reuter)—528
Frolov, I. T.—699
Frossard, Ludovico-Oscar—161, 260, 562, 581, 606
Fröhlich, Paul—531, 550
Frugoni, Emilio—436
Frunze, M. V.—46, 316, 457, 621
Fuad I—468
Furmanov, D. A.—77, 133
Fyodorov, I. V.—333

G

Galkin, A. A.—558
Gallacher, William—163, 241, 242, 350, 396, 684
Gamarnik, Y. B.—133
Gandhi Mahatma—145, 424, 444-446
Gaponenko, L. S.—25, 26
Garami, Ernő—155, 215
Garaudy, Roger—716
Garbai, Alexander—415
Garbai, Sandor—218
Garcia, Angel—439
García Quejido, Antonio—520
Garnier, J. P.—729
Garvey, Marcus M.—462
Gavrikov, Yu. P.—439

Genkina, E. B.—486
 Gennari, Egidio—162, 237, 508, 509,
 517, 548, 606
 Genov, G.—652
 Georgescu, T.—513, 522
 Gerhardsen, Einar—144
 Germanetto, Giovanni—161, 162
 Ghe, A. Y.—118
 Ghioldi, Rodolfo—435
 Gimpelson, E. G.—315, 316, 319, 332,
 334
 Gintsberg, L. I.—558, 642, 647
 Giolitti, Giovanni—509, 555, 556
 Girault, René—717
 Glunin, V. I.—452
 Göring, Hermann—641
 Goldberg, D. I.—356
 Goltz, Rüdiger von der—151, 306
 Gomez, Juan Vicente—440
 Gompers, Samuel—164, 174, 245,
 259, 261, 409
 Gorev, A. A.—338
 Gorky, A. M.—119, 120, 684
 Gorodetsky, E. N.—499, 712
 Gorter, Herman—380, 526, 527, 726
 Graftio, G. O.—338
 Gramsci, Antonio—162, 237-39, 364,
 365, 399, 517, 730, 733
 Graziadei, Antonio—400, 423, 424
 Greaves, C. D.—661
 Grimm, Robert—415
 Groener, Wilhelm—193
 Gromova, E. K.—333
 Grottian, Walter—733
 Grulović, Nikola—230
 Guber, A. A.—456
 Gubkin, I. M.—490
 Guchkov, A. I.—30, 41
 Gundorov, A. S.—43
 Gurovich, P. V.—347, 351, 510
 Gurvich, S. N.—564, 666
 Gusev, K. V.—90
 Gusev, S. I.—326

H

Haapalainen, Eero—148
 Haase, Hugo—157, 192, 196, 260, 359
 Habedank, H.—205, 645
 Haffner, Sebastian—725
 Hammer, Armand—616, 617
 Hapsburgs—158, 184, 187, 189, 211,
 215, 229, 231, 303, 700
 Hasanagich, E.—230
 Hašek, Jaroslav—135
 Hattori Siso—670

Hautmann, Hans—155, 209
 Haydar-khan Amu Mohammed—460
 Hayford, Caseley—462
 Haywood, William—165, 567, 683
 Heckert, Fritz—403, 531, 534, 536,
 540, 548, 640, 644
 Heiden, Konrad—558
 Heifetz, A. N.—477
 Hempel—544
 Henderson, Arthur—174, 182, 259,
 260, 262, 263, 371, 396, 404, 605,
 671, 673
 Herzog, Jacob—250
 Hevesi, Gyula—155
 Hilferding, Rudolf—196, 202, 203,
 284, 367-68, 416
 Hill (Hillstrom), Joe—165
 Hindenburg, Paul von—185, 193
 Hitler, Adolf—558, 559, 641, 646,
 725
 Hobsbawm, Eric—716
 Ho Chi Minh—443, 516
 Hoernle, Edwin—604
 Hoffmann, Johannes—205, 207
 Höglund, Carl Zeth—144
 Hohenzollerns—158, 193, 294, 303,
 700
 Holman—313
 Hortchanski, G.—530
 Horthy, Miklos—224, 416, 667, 671
 672
 Hortschansky, Günter—641
 Hue, Otto—405
 Hussarek, Max von—186
 Hutt, Allen—511
 Huysmans, Camille—259, 263, 371

I

Ibraghimov (Shakhin), T. A.—459
 Ignatiev, G. S.—75
 Igritsky, Yu. I.—716
 Ilyushechkin, V. P.—450
 Inkpin, Albert—242
 Ioffe, A. F.—338
 Ioffe, G. Z.—310, 716, 719
 Iovchuk, M. T.—712
 Irigoyen, Hipolito—441
 Iscaro, Rubens—435
 Ivanov, N. A.—470
 Ivanova, M. N.—460

J

Jacquemotte, Joseph—520
 Jancik, Ferenc—216

Janin, Maurice—313
Janousek, Antonin—222
Japaridze, P. A.—131
Jaross, Béla—317
Jaures, Jean—239, 260
Jeng Fucheng—317
Jogiches, Leo—193
Jones, David Ivon—146, 465, 466
Jouhaux, Léon—160, 240, 260, 261,
263, 362, 373, 410, 562, 586, 605
Julier, Ferenc—224
Justo, Juan B.—434

K

Kablukov, I. A.—338
Kahr, Gustav—646, 647
Kalandarashvili, N. A.—317
Kaledin, A. M.—79, 86, 87
Kalinin, M. I.—332, 493, 623, 625
Kalitskaya, F.—660
Kamenev, L. B.—36, 67, 69, 70, 622,
623, 635
Kamenev, S. S.—133
Kapp, Wolfgang—360, 361, 507, 642
Karakhan, L. M.—278
Karbyshev, D. M.—133
Karmanova, A. G.—333
Károlyi, Mihály—187, 215-17
Karpachev, B. A.—606
Karpinsky, A. P.—119, 338
Kashtan, William—712-13
Katayama, Sen—355, 581, 586, 606,
669
Katzlerović, Triša—140
Kautsky, Karl—53, 157, 172-77, 179,
182, 183, 196, 202, 205, 255-58,
260, 262, 282-89, 292-94, 359, 367,
377, 407, 411, 497-99, 560, 590,
626, 627, 629, 672, 673, 720, 723,
726, 729, 731, 732
Kautsky, Luise—172
Keep, John L. H.—718, 719
Kemal (Atatürk), Mustafa—457, 477
Kende, János—219
Kerensky, A. F.—30, 32, 50, 51, 62,
65, 66, 69, 74, 77, 89, 127, 144,
147, 203, 279, 294
Kharpandaryan, S. V.—620, 621
Khiabani, Mohammad—459-60
Khinchuk, L. M.—615
Kholodkovsky, V. M.—150
Kill, Jean—251
Kingissepp, Viktor—78, 306
Kiriakidis, G. D.—520
Kisch, Egon Erwin—155, 211

Klasson, R. E.—119
Klevansky, A. Kh.—128, 521
Klinger, G. K.—278
Klugmann, James—242, 352, 389,
412, 519, 565
Knief, Johann—139
Knox, Alfred—313
Kobetsky, M. V.—403
Kobozev, P. A.—98
Kobylyansky, K. V.—346, 349
Koenen, Wilhelm—514, 543, 550
Kolaroff, Wassil—533, 579, 591, 606,
640, 651, 652, 686
Kolb, Eberhard—725
Kolchak, A. V.—119, 308, 312-14,
317, 485, 526
Kolegayev, A. L.—86, 130
Kolesov, F. I.—80
Köller, Heinz—637
Kollontai, A. M.—34, 85, 482, 548,
605
Komarov, V. L.—338
Komolova, N. P.—142, 578
Kon, Feliks—687
Könnemann, E.—361
Korablyov, Yu. I.—315
Koritschoner, Franz—155
Kornienko, R. P.—456
Kornilov, L. G.—62, 69, 78, 79, 119,
361
Korolev, N. E.—423
Korvin, Otto—155, 216, 224
Kosev, D.—651, 652
Koshik, M. M.—344
Kotovskiy, G. I.—133
Kovačević, Nicola—230
Koval, B. I.—436, 437
Kovalenko, I. I.—669
Kowalski, J.—655
Kozelev, B. G.—685
Kozhevnikova, L. P.—362
Kramář, Karel—227
Krasin, L. B.—133, 477, 615
Krasin, Yu. A.—386, 716, 731
Krasnov, I. M.—348
Krasnov, P. N.—74, 127, 131, 307
Kravchenko, A. D.—317
Krejbich, Karel—521
Krivoguz, I. N.—587
Kron, G. W.—717
Krug, K. A.—338
Krupp, Gustav—507, 616, 639
Krupskaya, N. K.—113, 186, 303,
322, 604
Krylenko, N. V.—47, 78, 85, 107, 134
Krylov, A. N.—119

Krzhizhanovsky, G. M.—326, 327, 489
 Kuchik Khan—460
 Kuhn, A.—435
 Kuibyshev, V. V.—113, 133, 683
 Kulinich, I. M.—344
 Kumanev, V. A.—336
 Kun, Béla—83, 134, 135, 214, 216-18,
 220, 221, 223, 317, 380, 403, 531,
 533, 534, 548, 595
 Kunfi, Zsigmond—155, 215, 260, 415,
 416, 672
 Kunina, D. E.—517
 Kurkov, N. V.—668
 Kurochkina, O. I.—568
 Kursch, H. J.—361
 Kuusinen, Otto—149, 152, 533,* 543,
 548, 570, 606
 Kuzelo, E. F.—317
 Kuzmin, N.F.—712
 Kuznetsov, V. P.—332
 Kviring, E.—329

L

Labourbe, Jeanne—345, 346
 Lacis, M. J.—129
 Łańcucki, S.—657
 Landa, P. G.—469
 Landauer, Gustav—205
 Landsberg, Otto—192
 Langfeldt, Knut—169
 Laschitza, Annelies—179, 180, 358
 Laszló, Jenő—224
 Laue, Theodore H. von—721
 Laufenberg, Heinrich—359, 514, 527
 Lazzari, Constantino—162, 517
 Lebadi—465
 Ledebour, Georg—200, 416, 575, 590
 Le Duan—713
 Lefebvre, Raymond—142, 400
 Legien, Carl—157, 358, 373
 Lenin, V. I.—11-17, 21, 22, 25, 26,
 28, 30, 34-70, 72-74, 76, 82-88, 90-
 103, 105, 106, 108-26, 129-32, 134-37,
 139, 142-47, 150, 152, 153, 157,
 158, 170, 171, 175, 176, 178-84,
 186-91, 201, 203, 206, 218-23, 227,
 235, 237, 238, 248, 249, 254-59,
 263-83, 285-91, 293-96, 299, 303-
 05, 307-12, 314-16, 318, 320-29,
 331, 332, 334-42, 349, 350, 352,
 356, 357, 359, 361, 362, 366-69,
 373-96, 398-403, 416, 418-28, 430,
 432, 433, 441-444, 446, 453-455,
 459, 473, 474, 476-87, 489-91,
 493-504, 515, 518, 520-28, 530-41,

543-46, 550-53, 557, 559, 562, 563,
 567, 569-71, 573, 576-85, 588, 592-
 96, 598, 599, 606, 607, 609-13,
 615-36, 649, 657, 659, 664, 669,
 675, 676, 680-84, 687, 689-700,
 702-04, 706-17, 719-23, 726-35
 Lentz, I.—263
 Lenzman, J. D.—306
 Leonhard, W.—718
 Lerumo, A.—465-67
 Leshchinsky, Julian—82
 Levi, Paul—179, 514, 528-30, 540
 Leviné, Eugen—205-07
 Levkovsky, A. I.—444
 Li Dazhao—146, 450
 Li Fuchun—450
 Li Lisan—450
 Li Qihan—450, 451, 452
 Liebknecht, Karl—139, 157, 178,
 181, 184, 186, 192-95, 197, 198,
 200, 201, 205, 207, 257, 258, 263,
 267, 317, 344, 380, 388, 547, 576
 Ligdopoulos, D.—520
 Ligeti, Károly—82, 135
 Liptai, E.—218
 Litvinov, M.—163, 278
 Lloyd George, David—127, 174, 190,
 221, 241, 261, 351, 477, 610, 611,
 613, 664
 Lockhart, Robert—131-32
 Longo, Luigi—364, 509, 518, 592
 Longuet, Jean—161, 260, 262, 368,
 413, 515, 564, 665
 López, Alfredo—439
 Lopukhov, B. R.—556, 665
 Lorient, Fernand—260, 263
 Lorwin, Lewis L.—261, 373, 409, 411,
 575, 604, 640
 Lozovsky, A.—534, 546, 562, 571,
 604, 605, 640
 Ludendorff, Erich von—185, 647
 Lukács, Georg—380
 Lunacharsky, A. V.—73, 85, 118,
 325, 579
 Lüttwitz, Walter von—360, 361
 Luxemburg, Rosa—139, 157, 172, 173,
 178-80, 193, 194, 196-201, 205,
 207, 257, 263, 265, 344, 380, 388,
 576
 Lvov, G. E.—30
 Lyapin, P.—492

M

McCeaghy—313
 MacDonald, James Ramsay—175, 260,

- 261, 286, 287, 290, 291, 294, 368,
371, 396, 404, 407, 582, 583, 587,
667
MacFarlane, L. J.—511, 565
MacJean, John—163, 242
MacManus, Arthur—163, 242, 518,
579, 606
Makhno, N. I.—489
Malkov, V. L.—355, 682
Mangin, Charles—313
Mann, Thomas—350, 695
Manner, Kulervo—149
Mannerheim, Carl Gustav—148, 149
Manusevich, A. J.—659
Marabini, A.—237
Maraczewski, J.—225
Marat, Jean-Paul—139
Marchlewski (Karski), Julian—278,
397-99, 401
Marcuse, Herbert—132
Mariategui, José Carlos—439
Marie Adelaïde—251
Markin, N. G.—133
Maron, Antoine—468, 469
Martínez de la Torre, Ricardo—
439
Martov, Yu. O.—42, 115, 498
Marty, André—346
Marushkin, B. I.—716, 719
Marx, Karl—12, 15, 16, 25, 52, 57,
58, 83, 178, 229, 255, 269, 277, 289,
401, 426, 535, 560, 626, 627, 689,
694-98, 702, 706, 709, 717, 723, 728-
30, 732, 734
Masaryk, Tomáš—227, 597
Maslow, Adolf—528
Maslov, S. L.—64
Matyugin, A. A.—492, 608
Max von Baden—185, 192
Mayakovsky, V. V.—119
Mdivani, B. G.—621
Medvedev, S. P.—482
Mehring, Franz—157, 177, 178, 182
Mekhonoshin, K. A.—72
Meliksetov, A. V.—448
Mellows, Liam—661, 663
Melnichansky, G. N.—605
Melnikov, A. M.—445
Menshoy, A.—278
Meric, Victor—562
Mertens, Carneille—373, 405, 586
Meyer, Alfred G.—720, 721, 732
Meyer, Ernst—401, 403
Meyerhold, V. E.—119
Mickevičius-Kapsukas, V. S.—74, 304,
305
Midol, L.—363
Mikoyan, A. I.—427
Mikulik, József—216
Milkić, I.—278
Miller, E. K.—308, 313
Miliband, Ralph—241, 667
Milyukov, P. N.—30, 41, 49, 61, 79,
89
Minor (Ballister), Robert—541
Mints, I. I.—25, 64, 76, 711, 712
Mirbach, Wilhelm—129
Mironchuk, Piotr—439
Misiano, Francesco—237, 365, 578
Mitev, Y.—650
Mocanu, C.—232
Modigliani, J. E.—672, 673
Mohammad Ali—470
Molchanov, Yu. L.—570, 575, 584,
587
Monmousseau, Gaston—161, 240, 363,
515, 562, 637, 639, 666
Montagnana, Mario—508
Mooney, Tom—165, 567
Morozov, P. N.—322
Mukhamedzhanov, M. M.—547, 548
Müller, E.—435
Müller, Gustav—259
Müller, Hermann—260
Müller, R.—112
Munnich, Ferenc—135, 317
Muñoz, Juan Pradenas—144
Muñoz Diez, Francisco—434
Münzenberg, Wilhelm—396, 547, 681,
682, 684, 686
Muravyov, M. A.—129
Murphy, J. T.—242
Mussolini, Benito—162, 555, 592,
647, 665, 671
Myasnikov, A. F.—304
- N
- Nansen, Fridtjof—474
Napoleon—626
Narimanov, N. N.—145, 427, 459
Naumov, V. P.—712
Nechayev, S. G.—732
Neeson, Eoin—663
Nefedov, N. V.—333
Nemec, Anton—228
Nemes, Dezső—713
Neurath, Alois—606
Nevsky, V. I.—70
Nezhinsky, L. N.—218
Nguyen Ai Quac—516
Nie Rongzhen—450

Nielsen, Marie—253
 Nieuwenhuis, Ferdinand Domela—248
 Nitti, Francesco—346
 Nogin, V. P.—63
 Nollan, Günther—726, 727
 Nørlund, J.—168
 Noske, Gustav—200, 201, 204, 207,
 255, 284, 287, 288, 298, 573, 725
 Noulens, Joseph—132
 Novoselov, S. A.—332
 Nowakovich, K.—581
 Núñez de Arena—520

O

Obolensky, V. V. (Osinsky, N.)—115,
 117
 Obregon, Alvaro—438, 441
 O'Connor, Harvey—244
 Oertzen, Peter von—725
 Ollenhauer, Erich—606
 Onufriev, E. P.—43
 Oppokov, G. I. (Zomov, A.)—110, 114
 Orjonikidze, G. K.—427
 Orlova, M. I.—642, 644
 Oudegeest, Jan—260, 263, 373, 410,
 640, 673
 Owen, Robert—633

P

Pabst, Waldemar—201
 Pais, Sidónio—252
 Pakhomov, S. I.—332
 Pal, Bipin Chandra—446
 Pankhurst, Sylvia—242, 378, 379, 396
 Pankov, Yu. N.—520
 Pannekoek, Anton—380, 525-27, 726
 Papaioannou, Ezekias—735
 Parkhomenko, A. Ya.—316
 Parodi, Giovanni—508
 Patel, Surendra J.—444
 Päts, K.—306
 Pavlov, D. A.—70
 Pavlov, I. P.—338
 Pavlova, G. E.—548
 Pavlovich (Veltman, Volonter),
 M. P.—425
 Peidl, Gyula—224
 Pelagić, Vasso—230
 Peng Bai—450
 Penichet, Antonio—439
 Pereira, A.—437
 Peri, Gabriel—639
 Pestkowski, Stanisław—82
 Peterson, K. A.—306

Pethybridge, Roger—718, 720
 Petrov, S.—651
 Petrovsky, G. I.—85
 Peyer, Károly—224, 667
 Pichugin, A. K.—492
 Pieck, Wilhelm—193, 200, 678
 Pilsudski, Józef—225, 305, 314, 351
 Ping Ming—145
 Pintos, Francisco R.—436
 Piolot, Marc—239, 510
 Pipes, R.—718
 Platten, Fritz—250, 260, 266, 519
 Plekhanov, Georgi—33
 Pletnev, V. F.—337
 Podbelsky, V. N.—75
 Podvoisky, N. I.—47, 70, 72, 129
 Poincaré, Raymond—636, 638, 639
 Pokrovsky, M. N.—113, 325, 499
 Pollitt, Harry—242
 Polyakov, Yu. A.—486, 489, 503
 Ponomarev, Boris—20, 503, 631, 688,
 702, 704, 711, 714, 728, 735, 736
 Popov, D. I.—129
 Pór, Ernő—216
 Porankiewicz, Cz.—657
 Postyshev, P. P.—316
 Pozharskaya, S.—520
 Priester, Eva—156
 Proshyan, P. P.—86, 129
 Pryanishnikov, D. N.—490
 Pudov, I.—492
 Purcell, A. A.—350
 Pyatakov, G. L.—635
 Pyatnitsky, I. A.—75, 606

Q

Qu Qiubo—450

R

Rabchinsky, I. V.—78
 Rabkin, E. L.—637
 Radczun, Günther—179, 180
 Radek, Karl—278, 344, 531-33, 538,
 539, 541, 548, 581, 582, 587, 595,
 605, 606
 Rahja, Eino—82
 Rahja, Yukka—82
 Rai, Lala Sajpat—446
 Rákosi, Mátyás—548, 571, 606
 Rakov, I. F.—120, 121
 Rakovski, K. G.—221
 Ramzin, L. K.—338
 Rasch, Franz—156
 Rashin, A. G.—336

Raskolnikov, F. F.—133
 Rathenan, Walther—589
 Ravera, Camilla—591, 592
 Rayevsky, P. I.—332
 Razgon, A. I.—84
 Razin, Stepan—732
 Recabarren, Luis E.—435, 436
 Reed, John—73, 82, 138, 166, 246, 247
 Reisberg, Arnold—154, 214, 575, 577, 584, 589
 Renaudel, Pierre—160, 174, 182, 259, 260, 262, 263, 371, 407, 564
 Renner, Karl—154, 174, 209, 210, 213, 256, 394
 Renault, Daniel—579
 Reznikov, A. B.—423
 Reza Khan (Reza Shah Pahlavi)—460
 Roberto, Ricardo—579
 Rodzyanko, M. V.—79
 Roig de Leuchsenring, Emilio—144
 Roland-Holst, Henriette—248, 545, 548
 Rolland, Romain—142, 161, 695
 Romanovs—190
 Romanovsky, N. V.—716, 719
 Rónai, Zoltán—415
 Rosenberg, Arthur—723
 Rosmer, Alfred—240, 403, 581
 Rothstein, Theodore—242, 268, 605
 Rothziegel, Leo—155, 212
 Roy, Manabendra Nath—424-26, 428, 429
 Rozaliev, Yu. N.—456
 Rozhdestvensky, D. S.—338
 Rozinš-Azis, F. A.—78
 Rudas, László—216
 Rudnev, V. V.—75
 Rudnyansky, A.—278, 403
 Rudzutak, J. E.—483
 Ruge, Wolfgang—507, 561, 642, 646
 Ruiz, Ramón Eduardo—441
 Rürup, Reinhard—725
 Russell, Bertrand—366
 Rutgers, Sebald J.—380, 683
 Ruthenberg, Charles E.—246, 247, 567
 Ryabushinsky, P. P.—55
 Ryazanov, D. B.—115
 Rykov, A. I.—37
 Ryzhakov, P. I.—333

S

Salinari, Carlo—364, 509, 518, 592
 Sallai, Imre—155
 Salychhev, S. S.—515, 666
 Samoilov, F. N.—77
 Sardesai, S. G.—145, 444, 445, 447
 Sato Michio (Asado San)—356
 Savinkov, B. V.—79, 131
 Savitsky, N. O.—124
 Schapiro, Leonard—727
 Scheel, Walter—729
 Scheffer, H. J.—248
 Scheidemann, Philipp—157, 177, 182, 185, 186, 192, 200, 202-04, 256, 284, 589, 677
 Schneider, I.—636
 Schreiner, Albert—139
 Schüller, Richard—155
 Schuschnigg, Kurt von—214
 Secchia, Pietro—346, 508
 Segall, J.—167, 512
 Seid Zia al-Din—460
 Seitz, Karl—154, 155, 211, 260
 Sekt, G. von—643
 Sénard, Pierre—240, 515, 562, 639
 Semashko, N. I.—333
 Sembat, Marcel—174, 515
 Semenov, S. I.—436
 Serdić, D.—317
 Serrarens, P. J. S.—411
 Serrati, Giacinto Menotti—141, 142, 162, 237, 401, 423-24, 517, 528, 583, 592
 Severing, Carl—631, 643
 Sevryugina, G.—531, 548
 Shablin, N.—428
 Shahumyan, S. G.—63, 80, 131
 Shamide, L. A.—459
 Shamsutdinov, A. M.—457, 458
 Shaposhnikov, B. M.—133
 Shastitko, P. M.—423, 427, 428
 Shatelen, M. A.—338
 Shatskin, L. A.—606
 Shaw, George Bernard—681, 695
 Shaw, Tom (Thomas)—582, 673
 Shchors, N. A.—133
 Shinwell, Emanuel—415
 Shirinya, K. K.—399, 402, 533, 538
 Shkaratan, O. I.—319
 Shlichter, A. G.—85
 Shlyapnikov, A. G.—85, 482
 Shulgin, E. Ya.—338
 Shulgovsky, A. F.—436
 Sidorov, A. L.—25, 26
 Siemens, Carl—505
 Sik, E.—463
 Simanovsky, A. A.—333

Sacco, Nicola—567
 Sadoul, Jacques—161, 345, 349
 Safronov, V. P.—48

Sipols, V. J.—306
 Sirola, Yrjö—149
 Skobelev, M. I.—32
 Skrypnik, N. A.—95, 79
 Slaven, P. A.—135
 Slavin, G. M.—523
 Šmeral, Bohumir—521, 581, 586, 597
 Smidovich, P. G.—129
 Smiles, Nancy—548
 Smirnov, P. I.—333
 Smirnov, V. M.—152
 Smuts, Jan Ch.—221
 Snowden, Philip—142, 174, 260, 405
 Sobinov, L. V.—119
 Sochacki, E.—657
 Sokolov, A. A.—438
 Sorkin, G. Z.—427, 716, 722
 Sorokin, Pitirim—309-11
 Souvarine, Boris—548, 606
 Spiridonova, M. A.—129
 Spirin, L. M.—31-33, 327
 Spriano, Paolo—162, 163, 237, 364, 507, 509, 517, 556, 557, 591
 Stalin J. V.—70, 85, 274, 615, 616, 621-23, 635, 636, 679, 721
 Stambolisky, A.—185, 647-50
 Stanislavsky, K. S.—119
 Startsev, V. I.—70
 Stasova, E. D.—427
 Stauning, Thorvald—252, 404
 Stein, A.—173
 Stein-Kamensky—597
 Steinberg, I. Z.—86
 Stepanov, M. D.—332
 Stinnes, Hugo—193, 505, 589, 636, 642
 Stoecker, Walter—514, 606, 637
 Stolyarova, R.—264
 Strandman, Otto—307
 Stresemann, Gustav—642, 644, 646
 Ström, Otto—571
 Stromfeld, Aurél—223
 Strumilin, S. G.—319, 490
 Struve, P. B.—79
 Stučka, P. I.—74, 85, 278, 306
 Subhi, Mustafa—458
 Sukhanov, N. N.—626, 627
 Sukhe Bator—477
 Sultan-Galiev, H. G.—427
 Sultan Zade, A.—425, 429
 Sumarokova, M. M.—523
 Sun Yatsen—145, 448, 451-53
 Surkov, E. N.—124
 Suslov, M. A.—711
 Sverdlov, Ya. M.—70, 82, 84, 91, 131, 152, 186, 201, 304, 305

Svinhufvud, Pehr Evind—96, 148, 149, 151
 Szamuely, Tibor—135, 220-24
 Szanto, Béla—216
 Szturm de Sztrem, T.—226

T

Tagi Khan—460
 Tagore, Rabindranath—446
 Taimi, Alfred—149
 Tanner, Jack—395
 Tanner, Väinö Alfred—151, 152
 Tarle, G. J.—683
 Tasca, Angelo—238, 365
 Taube, von—119
 Täubler, Alexander—288
 Taylor, Frederick Winslow—118
 Taylor, Rex—663
 Temkin, Y. G.—264
 Tereshchenko, M. I.—30
 Terracini, Umberto—238, 346, 365, 509, 517, 539, 541, 545, 579
 Thalheimer, August—531, 536, 540, 550, 579, 645, 677
 Thälmann, Ernst—208, 514, 540, 589, 643, 645, 646, 685
 Thomas, Albert—160, 171, 260, 404, 405, 515
 Thyssen, Fritz—507, 641, 647
 Tikhun, A. T.—341
 Tilak, Bal Gangadhar—445, 446
 Timiryazev, K. A.—119, 338
 Timofeyev, T. T.—712, 717
 Tishev, D.—649
 Togliatti, Palmiro—238, 239, 509
 Tokoi, Oskari—147
 Tokuda, Kyuichi—669
 Toller, Ernst—205
 Ton Duc Thang—346
 Topekha, P. P.—669
 Tornianen, E.—150
 Tranmael, Martin—253
 Travin (Sletov), P. I.—170
 Trèves, Claudio—162
 Trier, Gerson Georg—253
 Troelstra, Pieter—248, 249, 260, 404, 407, 673
 Trotsky L. D.—37, 70, 85, 108, 114, 186, 323, 331, 332, 482, 483, 486, 499, 534, 579, 595, 635
 Trukan, G. A.—94
 Tsankov, A.—650, 652
 Tsereteli, L. G.—33, 89
 Tsiolkovsky, K. E.—119

Tukhachevsky, M. N.—133, 135
 Tunçay, M.—456
 Tuñón de Lara, Manuel—350, 520
 Tupolev, B. M.—264
 Turati, Filippo—162, 368, 578
 Tusar, Vlastimil—228, 521
 Tymieniecka, A.—655

U

Ulbricht, Walter—359, 360, 645, 647
 Ullman, R.—308
 Undasynov, I. N.—351, 352, 519, 565, 667
 Ungern, Roman—477
 Unslihts, Josifs—82
 Urbahns, Hugo—589, 597
 Uritsky, M. S.—70, 110, 114, 131, 388
 Urquhart, John—616
 Ustryalov, N. V.—499

V

Vacietis, I. I.—133
 Vakhtangov, Yevgeny B.—119
 Vágó, Béla—216
 Vaillant-Couturier, Paul—142, 349, 515, 541
 Vanderlip, Washington—616
 Vandervelde, Emile—174, 259, 404, 407, 576, 582, 583, 671, 673
 Vántus, Károly—216
 Vanzetti, B.—567
 Varga, Jenő—220, 402, 504, 570
 Victor Emmanuel—592
 Vieira, Alexandre—252
 Villa, Francisco—440
 Vladimirsky, M. F.—74-75, 85, 334
 Volkov, K. V.—333
 Volodarsky, V.—131
 Voroshilov, K. E.—78, 304, 316
 Vorovsky, V. V.—278, 614, 692, 693

W

Wagenknecht, Alfred—246, 247
 Wallhead, Richard Collingham—416
 Ware, Harold—683, 684
 Warski, Adolf—179, 540, 581
 Washington, Booker—462
 Webb, Beatrice—407, 671
 Webb, Sidney—174, 182, 405, 407
 Weber, Hermann—732
 Weber, S.—530

Wells, Herbert G.—327, 695
 Wels, Otto—195, 260, 261, 404, 671-73
 Welti, Franz—519
 Weltner, Jakob—224
 Wertheim, Johannes—155
 Wicks—217
 Wiebaut, E. M.—405
 Wieczorek, Julian—659
 Wienerman, Lazar—135, 317
 Wijnkoop (Wynkoop), David—248, 396
 Williams, Albert Rhys—134, 340
 Williams, V. R.—490
 Wilson, Woodrow—128, 164, 185, 246, 260
 Wimbush, S. Enders—721
 Wolff, Otto—507, 616
 Wolff, R. L.—717
 Wolffheim, Fritz—359, 514, 527
 Wrangel P. N.—314, 350, 352, 356, 648
 Wu Peifu—452

Y

Yakir, I. E.—133
 Yaroslavsky, E. M.—75, 106
 Yazhboronskaya, I. S.—179, 226, 657
 Yermolova, M. N.—119
 Yotov, Y.—648
 Yudenich, N. N.—307, 313, 314, 485
 Yun Daini—449

Z

Zagladin, V. V.—699, 702, 712
 Zak, L. M.—346
 Zakaznikova, E. P.—454
 Zaks, G. D.—108, 130
 Zalka, Máté—317
 Zapata, Emiliano—440
 Zápotocky, Antonin—229
 Zarodov, K. I.—716, 731
 Zatonsky, V. P.—79
 Zbikowski, Stanislaw—135
 Zetkin, Clara—157, 177, 179, 197, 204, 207, 353, 513, 516, 528, 530, 533, 535, 541, 545, 548, 551, 580-82, 595, 602, 606, 637, 640, 678, 679, 681, 684
 Zevin, Ya. D.—131
 Zhang Guotao—451
 Zhang Tailei—450
 Zheleznyakov, A. G.—92
 Zhivotov, M. N.—102
 Zhou Enlai—450

-
- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Zhukovsky, N. E.—119, 338 | Znamensky, O. N.—89, 91 |
| Zinoviev, G. E.—67, 69, 70, 111,
278, 403, 427, 530, 539, 541, 548,
570, 571, 576, 579, 595-99, 606, 635,
643, 644, 674, 677-79 | Zolotov, A. A.—333 |
| | Zorin S. S.—63 |
| | Zorina, A. M.—144 |
| | Zubov, I. S.—333 |

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